

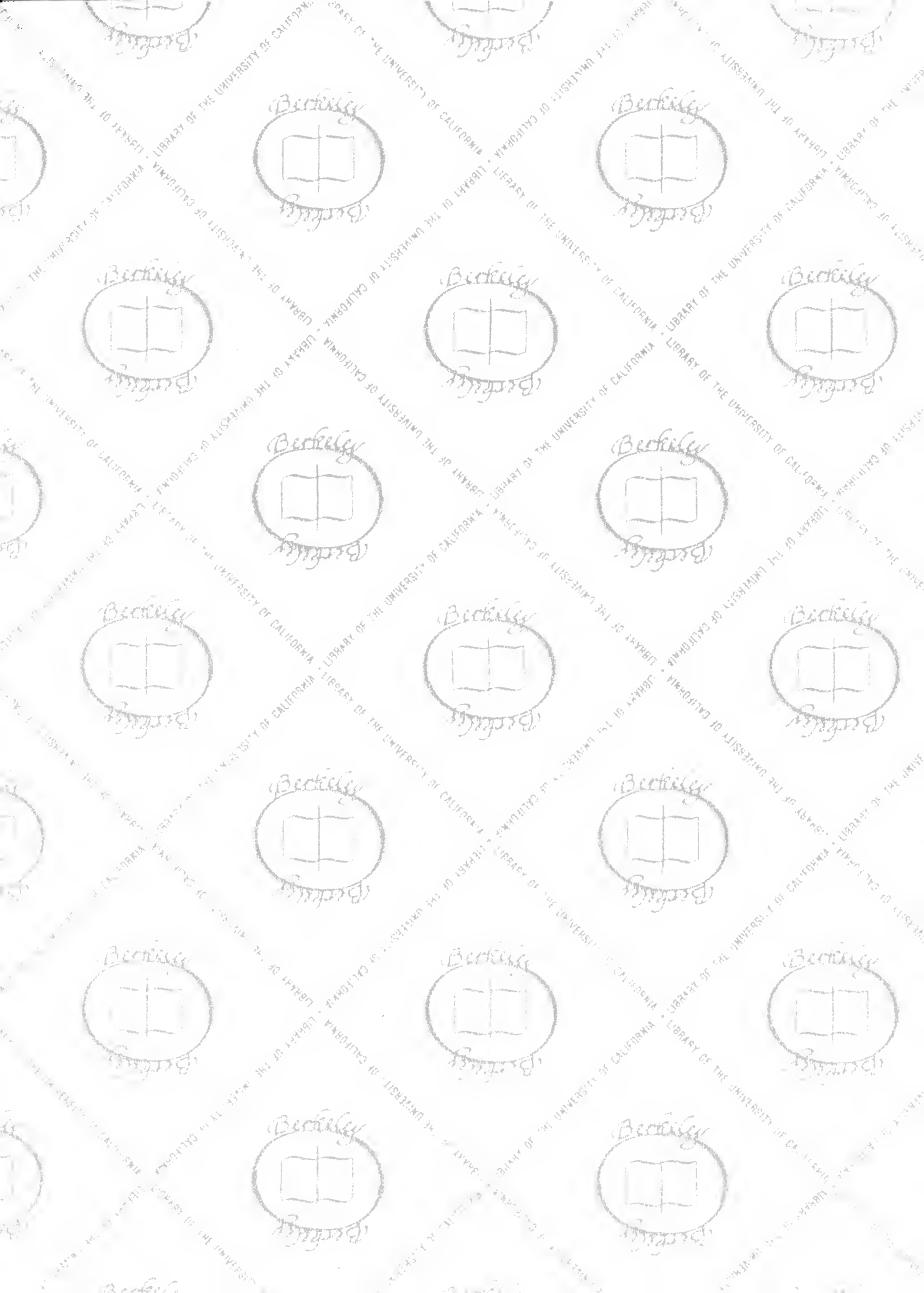
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Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Volume I

THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Interviews with:

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Tilford Dudley  | Byron Lindsley  |
| India Edwards   | Helen O. Lustig |
| Leo Goodman     | Alvin Meyers    |
| Kenneth Harding | Frank Rogers    |

Interviews Conducted by  
Eleanor Glaser, Fern Ingersoll,  
Gabrielle Morris, and Ingrid Scobie  
in 1976, 1977, 1978

Underwritten by grants from:

National Endowment for the Humanities, Rockefeller Foundation,  
Members and Friends of the Los Angeles Democratic Women's Forum

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ERRATA -- Helen Gahagan Douglas

Index: Volume I, The Political Campaigns  
Volume II, The Congress Years: 1944 to 1950

Jones, Glad Hall [Mrs. Mattison Boyd]; Delete "Glad Hall."  
Should read Jones, Mrs. Mattison Boyd



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## PREFACE

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded memoirs in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. The series has been designed to study the political activities of a representative group of California women who became active in politics during the years between the passage of the woman's suffrage amendment and the current feminist movement--roughly the years between 1920 and 1965. They represent a variety of views: conservative, moderate, liberal, and radical, although most of them worked within the Democratic and Republican parties. They include elected and appointed officials at national, state, and local governmental levels. For many the route to leadership was through the political party--primarily those divisions of the party reserved for women.

Regardless of the ultimate political level attained, these women have all worked in election campaigns on behalf of issues and candidates. They have raised funds, addressed envelopes, rung doorbells, watched polls, staffed offices, given speeches, planned media coverage, and when permitted, helped set policy. While they enjoyed many successes, a few also experienced defeat as candidates for public office.

Their different family and cultural backgrounds, their social attitudes, and their personalities indicate clearly that there is no typical woman political leader; their candid, first-hand observations and their insights about their experiences provide fresh source material for the social and political history of women in the past half century.

In a broader framework their memoirs provide valuable insights into the political process as a whole. The memoirists have thoughtfully discussed details of party organization and the work of the men and women who served the party. They have analysed the process of selecting party leaders and candidates, running campaigns, raising funds, and drafting party platforms, as well as the more subtle aspects of political life such as maintaining harmony and coping with fatigue, frustration, and defeat. Perceived through it all are the pleasures of friendships, struggles, and triumphs in a common cause.

The California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project has been financed by both an outright and a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Matching funds were provided by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Helen Gahagan Douglas component of the project, by the Columbia and Fairtree Foundations, and by individuals who were interested in supporting memoirs of their friends and colleagues. In addition, funds from the California State Legislature-sponsored Knight-Brown Era Governmental History Project made it possible to increase the research and broaden the scope of the interviews in which there was

a meshing of the woman's political career with the topics being studied in the Knight-Brown project. Professors Judith Blake Davis, Albert Lepawsky, and Walton Bean have served as principal investigators during the period July 1975-December 1977 that the project was underway. This series is the second phase of the Women in Politics Oral History Project, the first of which dealt with the experiences of eleven women who had been leaders and rank-and-file workers in the suffrage movement.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library. Interviews were conducted by Amelia R. Fry, Miriam Stein, Gabrielle Morris, Malca Chall, Fern Ingersoll, and Ingrid Scobie.

Malca Chall, Project Director  
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

15 November 1979  
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## Interviews in Process

Marjorie Benedict, Pauline Davis, Ann Eliaser, Elinor R. Heller, Lucile Hosmer, Emily Pike, Carmen Warschaw, Mildred Younger.

August 1980

The Helen Gahagan Douglas Component of the California Women Political Leaders  
Oral History Project

Volume I: *The Political Campaigns*

Discussion primarily of the 1950 Senate campaign and defeat, in interviews with Tilford E. Dudley, India T. Edwards, Leo Goodman, Kenneth R. Harding, Judge Byron F. Lindsley, Helen Lustig, Alvin P. Meyers, Frank Rogers, and William Malone.\*

Volume II: *The Congress Years, 1944-1950*

Discussion of organization and staffing; legislation on migrant labor, land, power and water, civilian control of atomic energy, foreign policy, the United Nations, social welfare, and economics, in interviews with Juanita E. Barbee, Rachel S. Bell, Albert S. Cahn, Margery Cahn, Evelyn Chavoor, Lucy Kramer Cohen, Arthur Goldschmidt, Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt, Chester E. Holifield, Charles Hogan, Mary Keyserling, and Philip J. Noel-Baker.

Volume III: *Family, Friends, and the Theater: The Years Before and After Politics*

Discussion of Helen and Melvyn Douglas and their activities at home with their family and among friends, and their work in the theater and movies, in interviews with Fay Bennett, Alis De Sola, Cornelia C. Palms, and Walter R. Pick.

Volume IV: *Congresswoman, Actress, and Opera Singer*

Helen Gahagan Douglas discusses her background and childhood; Barnard College education; Broadway, theater and opera years; early political organization and Democratic party work; the congressional campaigns, supporters; home and office in Washington; issues during the Congress years, 1944-1950; the 1950 Senate campaign against Richard M. Nixon, and aftermath; women and independence; occupations since 1950; speaking engagements, travel to Russia, South America, Liberia inauguration, civic activities, life in Vermont. (Volume in process)

\*William Malone preferred not to release his transcript at this time.



## INTRODUCTION

Helen Gahagan Douglas, one of the most notable women to grace the American artistic and political scenes during the past half-century, died of cancer in June 1980 at the age of eighty. Despite frequent hospitalization and progressive weakness during the last several years of her life, she courageously refused drugs to ease her pain, preferring to keep her mind clear so that she could remain close to her family; so that she, among other activities, could speak to a congressional hearing in Washington by phone on behalf of cancer research; so that she could organize assistance programs for children in New York City; and so that she could complete her autobiography. She insisted on living as fully as possible until the disease overtook her. A year before her death, she received a Medal of Distinction from her alma mater Barnard College, for her "fearless, lifetime devotion to the cause of political, racial and religious freedoms and for instructing us in citizenship, in responsibility and in service to ideals and country."

Within her lifetime, three generations of Americans came to know Helen Douglas. First a generation knew her as a beautiful and highly talented stage and movie actress whose storybook romance with fellow actor Melvyn Douglas culminated in a marriage that lasted nearly fifty years. She then picked up another generation when, taking leave of her career as an actress, she devoted her energies, her intelligence, and her charisma to politics. She was Democratic National Committeewoman for California (1940-1944), vice-chair of the California Democratic party in charge of its women's division (1942-1944), Congresswoman from California (1944-1950), and an alternate delegate to the United Nations General Assembly (1946).

During these ten years she pled the cause of the poor and helpless, especially the migrant farm worker, fought successfully for civilian control of atomic energy, and argued the case for improved international relations. In 1950 she lost a hard-fought campaign for Senate to Richard Nixon and disappeared from public attention. She and Melvyn moved to New York and Vermont, where she continued to study and lecture about those issues to which she had always been committed--human rights and world peace. And as always, her activities involved her family and many close and devoted friends.

After the advent of Watergate in 1972 the media sought her out to appraise Richard Nixon in light of her experiences. Thus a third generation was introduced to the legendary Helen Gahagan Douglas.

This volume is one of four that comprise the Helen Gahagan Douglas Unit of the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project, a unit to document the career of this leading humanitarian and political figure.

In 1974 the Regional Oral History Office received a grant and a matching grant offer from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a series of biographical interviews with women who had held leadership positions in

California politics between 1920 and 1965. Helen Gahagan Douglas, one of the best known women in California politics during that period, was among those listed as potential interviewees. Recognizing Helen Douglas's historicity, the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to a match to fund Helen Gahagan Douglas's interview with the proviso that the project include persons who had been associated with her.

The Helen Gahagan Douglas oral history unit, as it ultimately evolved, was comprised of Helen Douglas and twenty-five men and women who had known her as a friend and/or associate at important bench marks in her life--in college, the theater, and during and following her active political career.

Mrs. Douglas assisted in the selection of these representative persons whom she thought would provide useful and objective information about her activities throughout her life. In addition to the interviews in the Helen Gahagan Douglas Unit, other women in the series discussed her in their own interviews; former associates Paul Taylor and Judge Oliver Carter had talked about her previously in their oral histories.

During the years between 1974 when the project was initiated and its completion in 1981, inflation cut deeply into the initial grants, requiring the office to seek additional funding. To the rescue came members and friends of the Democratic Women's Forum in Los Angeles, an organization which Helen Douglas helped to establish in the mid-forties. Later the National Endowment and the Rockefeller Foundation gave additional grants.

The project has depended on the efforts of a number of persons. Interviewers were Amelia Fry, Eleanor Glaser, Fern Ingersoll, Ingrid Scobie, and Malca Chall. Catherine Scholten prepared the lengthy, much-emended Douglas transcript for typing, and also selected the photographs and appendix material. Teresa Allen helped develop the plan to keep track of the interviews from transcribing through final typing. Marie Herold was responsible for preparing the indexes, and for tying up the countless loose ends which are always present in long-term projects.

The material contained in these volumes and others in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project should provide students with fresh information and insights into the life and political and social milieu of Helen Douglas. Those seeking additional information will find it in the Helen Gahagan Douglas papers in the Carl Albert Congressional Research Center at the University of Oklahoma, and in the collections of Melvyn Douglas papers in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and Indiana University. In this latter collection Ingrid Winther Scobie plans to deposit the tapes of interviews she has conducted while preparing for her upcoming biography of Mrs. Douglas. The Roosevelt library also contains much source material on Helen Douglas, her friendship with the Roosevelts and other leading New Dealers, and her activities in the Democratic party.

Fortunately for historians these interviews in the Douglas unit were completed just prior to the recent deaths of Helen Gahagan Douglas, Albert Cahn, Charles Hogan, Alvin Meyers, and Walter Pick. The Regional Oral History Office is grateful for the financial support of the foundations and the friends of Helen Gahagan Douglas, and for the assistance of the hardworking staff, factors which have made possible this oral history project about an active and influential participant in an important era of American history.

Malca Chall, Project Director  
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

8 June 1981  
Regional Oral History Office  
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On behalf of future scholars the Office wishes to thank the friends of Helen Gahagan Douglas who responded to the request for funds sponsored by the Los Angeles Democratic Women's Forum, especially Marie Melgaso and Elizabeth Snyder who spearheaded that effort. These contributions helped match the grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Rockefeller Foundation, thereby making possible the production of the Helen Gahagan Douglas Unit of the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project.

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Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

India Edwards

CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATS: A VIEW FROM WASHINGTON

An Interview Conducted by  
Gabrielle Morris  
in 1978

Underwritten by grants from:

National Endowment for the Humanities, Rockefeller Foundation,  
Members and Friends of the Los Angeles Democratic Women's Forum

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January 16, 1990

# Political Trailblazer India Edwards Dies

India Edwards, the Democratic Party "queen maker" who blazed a trail for women in American politics, has died at age 94.

Mrs. Edwards died Sunday at the Fircrest Convalescent Hospital in Sebastopol.

A confidante of two presidents and an intimate of several generations of Democratic politicians, Mrs. Edwards eschewed personal ambitions. "If I'd wanted to advance myself, I suppose I could have," she once told an interviewer. "But what I really wanted was a lot of jobs for a lot of women — and I got them."

Indeed, Mrs. Edwards' influence on President Harry Truman — who remained her all-time political hero — led to the appointment of dozens of women to high government positions, including Georgia Neese Clark, the first woman treasurer of the United States, and former Ambassador to Denmark Eugenia Anderson, the country's first woman ambassador.

"Sometimes I felt like a ghoul," Mrs. Edwards once recalled. "I'd read the obits, and as soon as a man (with a political appointment) had died, I'd rush over to the White House and suggest a woman to replace him."

Mrs. Edwards' tenacity was matched by her acute political sense. In 1948, she was prepared to wager \$1,000 at 16-to-1 odds on Truman at a time when the incumbent president was given up for dead in his re-election fight against Republican Thomas Dewey. Her husband stopped her from making the bet, saying, "Loyalty is fine, India, but



INDIA EDWARDS

**She advanced cause of women**

**you don't have to be a fool."**

Despite having foreseen that upset of the century, she was wrong about one thing. A few years later, after Mrs. Edwards was symbolically "nominated" at the 1952 Democratic convention to be Adlai Stevenson's running mate, she told an interviewer that no woman would ever hold the No. 2 spot on a national ticket in her lifetime.

In 1984, Democrat Geraldine Ferraro proved Mrs. Edwards wrong — no doubt to her great delight.

India Edwards was born in Chicago in 1895 and schooled in St. Louis. She returned to her hometown, where she was hired as a reporter by the Chicago Tribune. She remained at the paper for 27 years,

eventually working as society editor and women's editor. She covered the presidential nominating conventions of 1932, 1936 and 1940, from the "women's angle."

She resigned from the Tribune in 1942 when she married her third husband, the late Herbert Threlkeld Edwards, a State Department officer.

Mrs. Edwards' involvement in politics began in 1944 after her son, John Holbrook, was killed in World War II. The impetus was a famed speech delivered by Clare Boothe Luce to the Republican convention.

Luce referred to the war dead as "GI Jims." Mrs. Edwards remembered, and said "that if only they could come back, they'd be against Roosevelt. Well, the very next day, I went down and volunteered to work for the Democrats."

Eventually, she rose to the rank of director of the Women's Division of the Democratic National Committee, then became party vice chairwoman when that separate division was abolished.

Mrs. Edwards was asked to head the Democratic National Committee in 1951 but declined, telling Truman, "The men of the party wouldn't like it. I'd have been so busy protecting my rear that I nev-

er would have had any chance to look forward."

Mrs. Edwards remained active in Democratic Party politics for more than 30 years — save for a brief lapse in 1976 when she backed independent presidential candidate John Anderson, a move she later called "the only thing I ever did in politics that I regret." By 1984, she was back in the Democrat fold, as an 89-year-old delegate for presidential hopeful Gary Hart.

Even as she pursued her political interests, Mrs. Edwards remained active on behalf of a number of organizations and causes, among them the Washington, D.C., Health and Welfare Council; Girls Clubs of America, and the Women's Medical College, now the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

A member of the Washington Press Club, Mrs. Edwards published her autobiography in 1977; Truman suggested the title, "Pulling No Punches."

Mrs. Edwards is survived by five grandchildren: Challen Von Junsch and India Clarke, both of Sebastopol; Pamela Mazza and Andrea Ham, both of Santa Rosa; and Eugenie Delles of Petaluma.

Funeral arrangements are pending.







India Edwards with Lyndon B. Johnson  
at the White House, June 7, 1968

*photo by Yoshimoto*



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

India Edwards is undoubtedly one of the most vigorous, forthright, and engaging persons to have graced the intricate world of national politics. An experienced newspaper editor, Mrs. Edwards began her political work in 1944 as a volunteer for Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman, went on to become vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee and head of the women's division [1948-1960], and later served in special advisory posts for Lyndon Johnson. When the Regional Oral History Office learned that she had retired to California to be near her daughter, she was asked to record her experiences in working with Helen Gahagan Douglas for the project in progress documenting Mrs. Douglas's career.

Although hesitant about an easterner commenting on California affairs, Mrs. Edwards agreed and the following interview was recorded on May 16, 1978, in her comfortable apartment in Greenbrae, Marin County. Though brief, the wide-ranging conversation touches not only on Mrs. Douglas's ill-fated 1950 race for the U.S. Senate against Richard Nixon, but also on various aspects of the California Democratic party and the past and present status of women in politics.

Mrs. Edwards reports succinctly some of her concerns about Mrs. Douglas's own campaign and her belief that Mrs. Douglas could have run for office again and won, and should have, to counteract people's fear of Nixon. Visiting California on DNC business over the years, she found more political individualists than elsewhere. She adds that other states also have regional frictions, and credits Elizabeth Snyder as one of the leaders in achieving a unified statewide party for the first time in 1954.

Some of the problems faced by women in politics Mrs. Edwards discusses in relation to Helen Gahagan Douglas's experience, such as family responsibilities and unrealistic supporters; others in broad terms, including her repeatedly-expressed concern that women's status is lower in many ways today than it was twenty years ago. She suspects that "women have disappointed men in that they were afraid women were going to clean things up and they haven't done it."

Mrs. Edwards reviewed the edited transcript of the interview and made minor factual revisions. Additional information on her political work is available in her book, Pulling No Punches, and in interviews she recorded in 1969 for the Truman and Johnson presidential libraries. See also other interviews in the California Women Political Leaders Series.

Gabrielle Morris  
Interviewer-Editor

2 June 1978  
Regional Oral History Office  
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## I CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATS: A VIEW FROM WASHINGTON

[Interview 1: May 16, 1978]

[begin tape 1, side A]

Women's Division, Democratic National Committee

Morris: We do appreciate your taking the time to talk to our project when you've already done several other oral history interviews.

Edwards: I have copies of the ones I did for the Truman Library and the Johnson Library.\* I'd be glad to let you see them if you wanted to. I'm sure I could find them without too much effort.

I wish somebody--it couldn't be I, because I am too personally associated with it. But I wish some woman who's interested in the advance of women now would do a paper or an article about the lack of progress of women because, believe me, women are in a far lower status today than they were twenty years ago.

Morris: That's one of the questions that has been raised by a number of people.

Edwards: It is a really tragic, shocking thing. And I can't speak as intimately about the Republicans, of course, as I can about the Democrats, but I see nothing to indicate that the Republicans are in any better shape than the Democrats. And the Democrats, I can assure you, on the national level are not organized as they should be.

---

\*Oral History Interview with Mrs. India Edwards, January 16, 1969, by Jerry N. Hess, the Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri, 1972, and Interview with Mrs. Edwards by Joe B. Frantz, February 4, 1969, for Lyndon Johnson Presidential Library.

Morris: Compared to what they were in the '40s?

Edwards: And as for influence, who except Mrs. Carter has any? Too many of Carter's appointments are women whose husbands, sons, fathers, or brothers are Democratic leaders in some segment of society. President Carter has gone back to the old patronage days. A woman should be appointed because of her ability to do a certain job. If such a woman has worked for the Democratic party, well and good. A Democratic President will favor her over a member of the opposition party.

I got from the Washington Monthly the other day, the list of Who's Who in the Carter administration, and I could just weep when I look at the list of women and see how few are in policy-making posts.

Morris: Are you disappointed in the numbers as well?

Edwards: Oh, there are quite a few numbers. I wouldn't fuss with Carter over the numbers. I think he's done pretty well on the numbers game. [Laughter] But I don't want to see a woman appointed just because she's a woman. I want her to be top grade, and have some influence, have some authority.

Morris: That's one reason that we wanted to talk with you this morning about working with Helen Gahagan Douglas, as an example of the kind of woman and the kind of influence that was possible for a woman in political office to have in the forties.

Edwards: Yes, but I think Helen was not alone in this. I think there were a great number of women in the Democratic party who were working because of idealism, because of a belief in--well, let's just say the New Deal, in what FDR was trying to do and what he was accomplishing.

Now, that was the whole purpose of the Women's Division of the Democratic National Committee--to educate not just women, but women and men, as to the goals of the administration and how they were going about pursuing them. We had a magazine, the Democratic Digest, which was a house organ, really, but the men used it as much as the women because it gave them the kind of precise information they needed about what was going on in the other states, and how the president's different programs were proceeding, or not proceeding. They didn't have to get it from the newspapers. Of course, there was no television, but there was radio. But they didn't have to get it from that, either.



Edwards: And now, where are they going to get it? The Democratic National Committee never sends out anything but an appeal for funds.

Morris: [Laughter] Was Mrs. Douglas active in the Women's Division of the Democratic party?

Edwards: Well, yes and no. She was national committeewoman here before she ran for Congress, but she never was active in the Women's Division except insofar as she was a member of the National Committee.

And, as I said, there were a lot of women like Helen. Helen was an outstanding one because of her background, her charm, her beauty and intelligence. She wasn't the only one, however, for all over the country, Democratic women were seeking to help our government to be strong and honest.

We don't have that kind of national organization now. There is no national leadership among Democratic women.

Morris: When you say leadership, was there a kind of a women's caucus in any sense?

Edwards: There wasn't a women's caucus, but we always had strong women at the National Committee that planned programs. We went around the country telling the Democratic story. The women who preceded me at the Democratic National Committee, starting with Mary Dewson who was FDR's top woman, planned programs to interest women. Their feeling was that women should be brought into politics through an interest in issues. We used to say, "Sell a woman, and you've sold a family."

If a woman would take the trouble to know what the issues were, and what the president was trying to accomplish, and what the Congress was doing either to help him or to oppose him, she would recognize how all legislation touched her family.

We used to hold regional meetings and have lots of meetings where there wasn't just one speaker; it would be a seminar sort of thing to give them information that they had no other place to obtain.

Well, they don't do that now. Everything you get now is from the TV. The TV decided that "Jimmy Who" was the most colorful Democrat on the horizon for the 1976 nomination. It nominated him. It and the polls elected him. There isn't any question in my mind but what this is true and I think it is a tragic situation.

Edwards: They talked about "boss rule" in the old days in politics. Well, [chuckle] the most powerful boss in Tammany Hall or in New Jersey or Chicago never had the power that commentators on TV and press have.

Morris: That's an interesting change in the whole political structure.

Edwards: A tragic change.

Morris: Did Mrs. Roosevelt, too, see the Women's Division as an aid to the President's office?

Edwards: Oh, definitely, yes.

Morris: To build his constituency.

Edwards: Yes. It was she who, working with Molly Dewson, built the Women's Division into what it was. Then it slowed down a little during the war, but just because of the physical necessity and the difficulties of travel. But even so, it still carried on the informational, educational work of the committee.

You see, the National Committee during the Roosevelt and Truman years, was looked upon as a very strong arm of the administration. It has not been since. Kennedy started to kill it and Johnson finished it, or at least he almost killed it, and Carter has finished it.

Morris: [Laughter] In other words, the National Committee used to have more role--

Edwards: It had some power then.

Morris: Between elections, in other words.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: They had a continuing kind of function.

Edwards: Its main function was to put on the convention, but in between conventions they were to keep the party alive. And they can't expect to bring people out for a presidential election if they're not interested at all in between elections.

Franklin Roosevelt said many times--I never heard him say it, but I know that he said it because many people have told me, people for instance, like Jim Farley, that Franklin Roosevelt said it was the women who elected him, every time, and the

Edwards: continuous work that was done by the Women's Division of the committee between elections.

Morris: So he felt an obligation to stay in touch with them afterwards?

Edwards: He felt that they were his greatest asset, that he would be not using the powerful secret weapon that he had if he didn't use the women to spread information about his programs.

Morris: And then, in turn, to talk to their congressmen in terms of voting for particular legislation?

Edwards: Yes. Well, we used to have--and I'm sure that the women who preceded me did the same thing, I had a list of women. Now, they were not necessarily the women elected to leadership in the state, because they weren't always the best. Sometimes they were, sometimes they weren't.

In this state they did elect as national committeewomen grade A women: Lucretia Grady and then Helen Douglas, and then Ellie Heller--they were all excellent politicians and very good. In those days each state only had one national committeewoman and one national committeeman. Now they have a whole--

Morris: A dozen at least.

Edwards: Yes. In some states I found that there were weak women leaders. The national committeewoman, the state vice-chairman, usually the vice-chairman. The rule was that either the chairman or the vice-chairman must be a woman.

Elizabeth Snyder: First Woman Chairman, California Democratic Central Committee \*

Edwards: California was the only state that ever had a woman chairman up through my time. Now, I don't know what's happened since then. I haven't kept track. But Elizabeth Snyder was chairman of the state committee [1954-1956].

Morris: I was going to ask you about her later on. Our understanding is that that was a real struggle for her to--

Edwards: Oh, it was a hard-fought election. I was out there at the time and I was helping her.

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\*See interview with Elizabeth Snyder, California's First Woman State Party Chairman, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1977.

Morris: Because she was a woman and--?

Edwards: Because she was, I thought, one of the smartest politicians I'd ever worked with. I thought that as long as there was a group that wanted her as chairman, it seemed to me that to deny her the chairmanship just because of her sex--it was about time we got over that.

Morris: Was that the major objection to her?

Edwards: Not entirely.

Morris: Because there had been some problem that year that--

Edwards: Oh, her husband was mixed up with some--I forget his name.

Morris: Bonelli.

Edwards: Yes, Bonelli. A lobbyist for the liquor industries, I believe.

Morris: That was the question that I don't think was ever determined.

Edwards: No.

Morris: Bonelli was a member of the State Board of Equalization and there was a problem about liquor licenses.

Edwards: Well, Nate Snyder did serve time in prison, but he was given a full pardon and reinstated in the practice of law, so I think his prosecution was a political thing, to hurt his wife. Those things happen, you know. People are--

Morris: Well, the whole business of regulating liquor licensing was a very knotty problem in California from Prohibition until the mid-fifties.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: I suppose it would have been the same problem in other states too?

Edwards: Yes. Well, but not quite so much, I think. But I didn't know Nate. I never worked with Nate. But I worked very closely with Elizabeth in politics and she's a very smart politician. She did a great job as chairman. I do not think Pat Brown would have been governor if it hadn't been for Elizabeth Snyder.

They had five, or maybe it was six, special elections for the Congress during the time she was the chairman of the committee and they won all of them. That was unheard of, that kind of victory.

Morris: Special elections are tougher than the regular bi-annuals?

Edwards: Yes, usually.

Morris: Why?

Edwards: Well, usually it's for a short term. It's hard to get money for the campaign, you know. The man may only have, or woman, a short time to serve. And, well, it's just--up to that time California was really a Republican state, you see. It wasn't a Democratic state.

Morris: That's the way the elections went, but the registration had been Democratic for a long time.

Edwards: Yes, but I mean the elected offices, the big offices, went to the Republicans for the years when Earl Warren was in, and Goody Knight, and the Republicans controlled both houses of the legislature at that time.

Liz was one of the most active in doing away with cross-filing. She was state vice-chairman before she became state chairman. And John Anson Somebody--what was his name?

Morris: Ford.

Edwards: He was the national committeeman and he was one hundred percent in back of Liz. He thought she was wonderful. And he raised the money and put in some money for that campaign to do away with crossfiling and she ran it. That was a great thing for the state of California.

Morris: From the Democrats' point of view, it would keep Republicans from picking up a lot of Democratic votes in the primaries.

Edwards: Yes. You know, the advertisements on a billboard--no Republican ever had the word "Republican." The Democrats would have "Democrat." And on the ballot there was nothing to indicate whether the man was a Democrat or a Republican.

California Democratic Council and the 1954 Gubernatorial Campaign

Morris: Was she involved also to any extent in the building of the local Democratic clubs, the grass roots kind of organization?

Edwards: The CDC? [California Democratic Council]

Morris: Yes.

Edwards: Yes. When the CDC started, they were a bunch of amateurs, [Laughter] I never will forget one thing that happened, one of the funniest things that ever happened to me in my political life. I was vice-chairman of the national committee, so you would say I was a member of the organization.

Morris: Yes, very much so.

Edwards: I was out here and the CDC was just forming and they invited me to come to a breakfast. I was the only person outside of the people who were founding the CDC who was invited. I remember it very well. It was at some hotel in Hollywood. They sat there and right in my presence they said [chuckles] that they were going to ignore the state committee, they were going to have nothing to do with the elected officers! [Laughter]

Morris: Oh, my heavens! [Laughter]

Edwards: They were going to endorse candidates and they were going to be the power in the state [laughter]. And I got up at the meeting and I said, "Well, ladies and gentlemen, you know, I think you made a mistake to invite me to come to this, because you can't think I'm going to agree with what you're saying!" I said, "What you should be doing is helping to strengthen the Democratic organization, not setting up something in opposition to it." [Laughter] I said, "You ought to at least join them to try to win."

But they were very funny. They were just--Alan Cranston was--[laughter]. I talked to Alan about that afterwards and kidded him. I said, "Well, Alan, you soon got over your kindergarten days, didn't you!" [Laughter]

Morris: It's been said that one of the reasons that he wanted to help organize the CDC was to give himself a political base.

Edwards: Probably. I have no doubt that's true.

Morris: He was one of their first--

Edwards: And that was all right, but it was pretty dumb of them to announce their intentions [laughter] in my presence.

Morris: Oh, my! Yes. The first candidate they endorsed for governor was a man named Richard Graves, in 1954.

Edwards: How well do I remember him! He had been a Republican. He only became a registered Democrat on the last day for filing, so that he could file as a Democrat, and I knew him quite well. I was here all during that campaign. Really, I thought it was disgraceful that the Democrats nominated him. I disliked him very much. I thought he was not very four-square. I didn't care for him at all.

Morris: He'd been kind of on the other side, as it were. He'd never been active in politics because he had been the lobbyist for the League of California Cities.

Edwards: Yes. And he was a registered Republican up until they nominated him. But it showed such a lack of talent in the Democratic party to reach out and pick Richard Graves.

Morris: One of the other contenders was a man named Laurance Cross, from Berkeley. He'd been mayor of Berkeley.

Edwards: I guess I did know him, but I didn't know him very well.

Morris: He was considered to be a socialist with a lower case "s", I think.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: One of the theories is that they got Mr. Graves to run because they were afraid that Laurance Cross would win the nomination.

Edwards: Yes. Well, I don't know, but I thought it was pretty poor politics.

Morris: He also was one of the people who opposed Liz Snyder.

Edwards: Oh, yes.

Morris: He was concerned about the connections with the liquor interests.

Edwards: Oh, yes. Very, very, very concerned, yes.

Morris: I wondered if, when Mrs. Snyder did become chairman, that would have meant that there was less support in the Democratic party for Mr. Graves as their candidate than there might have been otherwise.

Edwards: I don't think so. Elizabeth Snyder is a very honest person and I'm sure that she never would allow any personal feeling about how she felt that Graves may have treated her to influence her work for the party. I'm sure of that.

He pulled some awfully dirty tricks on me. That's why I say that I know he wasn't--

Morris: Really?

Edwards: Yes. He used me, tried to, and, in fact, in such a way that I bawled him out one night and I said, "You're never going to be elected governor." I said, "And don't dare go back to Washington again and go around and call on people and tell them that I have sent you to them," which is what he did.

Morris: Without talking to you beforehand about it?

Edwards: Yes. He made his first trip to Washington after he was nominated and I was out here. He went back to Washington and he called on a lot of Senators and told them that I had suggested that he call on them and ask for their help. And it was not true, I had not.

Morris: That is rather a breach of--

Edwards: Oh, yes! That is really low-down! [Indignant laughter] And it just so happened that a couple of them were very close friends of mine and got in touch with me. Stuart Symington was one. Stu called me and he said, "What do you want me to do for this man Graves? He didn't make a very good impression on me."

I said, "I don't want you to do a thing for this man Graves. What are you talking about?" And he said, "Well, he came to see me. He called and first of all asked if you had written me a note about him. And I said no, I hadn't had any note. And he said, "Oh, well, I guess she's just so busy she didn't get around to doing it. But she wanted me to be sure and come and call on you and ask for your help." And he did that with several people.

Morris: Mr. Symington was from Missouri.

Edwards: Yes. He was a very powerful Senator.

Morris: Right.





1950 Reception for Helen Gahagan Douglas at Los Angeles Biltmore.  
From left: Mrs. George Luckey, wife of Democrat National Commit-  
teeman; India Edwards; Margaret Truman; Helen Gahagan Douglas;  
Mrs. Harry S. Truman; Mrs. Esther Murray, at that time vice-chair-  
man in charge of women's activities in southern California.



Edwards: And Graves did that with quite a few people.

Morris: He wanted their help in the California campaign.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: Was that customary in 1954?

Edwards: Well, no. It was not customary to bypass the National Committee.

Helen Gahagan Douglas's 1950 Senate Campaign

Edwards: You might ask the National Committee to get help for you from-- for instance, Helen Douglas, in her campaign--I don't know who made the request, whether it was Helen herself personally (it's so many years ago, I can't remember) or whether it was her campaign manager or who it was. But somebody connected with Helen's campaign asked me if I could get Jiggs Donahue to come out here and speak for her, because Jiggs was a Catholic and was known as-- well, I have forgotten. It's so many years ago. But he held some official office in Washington, prosecuting attorney or something. I don't know what he was.

Anyway, it was felt that his coming out here and speaking for Helen would be a great help to her, and so I got Jiggs to come out here and spend a week. That kind of thing was done, yes. But the candidate would hardly go to--

Morris: Mr. Donahue himself, for instance.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: Was this in the 1950 campaign?

Edwards: That was in the '50 campaign.

Morris: Yes. Was the Catholic vote a particular issue in 1950?

Edwards: Well, it was more than that. It was because he was also very well known as an anti-communist. I can't tell you now what it was, but he had had something to do with maybe sending some communists to prison or something. I don't know. Something of that sort. And yes, because Nixon, you see, was calling her the "Pink Lady" and trying to indicate that she was a communist. So, it was felt that it would be very helpful to have this Jiggs Donahue, who was so well known as a Catholic and an anti-communist.

Morris: To come and speak on her behalf.

Edwards: Yes. And he did. He came out here and made quite a few speeches. We paid his expenses, the National Committee.

Morris: So that, in that way, the National Committee can really make a difference in a campaign in a state.

Edwards: Yes, it could. They don't do it any more, but--

Morris: Somewhere we came across a comment that you had advised Helen Douglas not to run for the Senate.

Edwards: Well, she didn't really ask my opinion. I mean, in making her decision, I don't think that what I thought had any great bearing on the decision she made. But I was not enthusiastic about her running. I felt that Helen was in such a strong position in the House. She was very close to the chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Committee. It would have been only a matter of a few years for her to hold that prestigious and powerful chairmanship.

Morris: Particularly in the fifties.

Edwards: Yes. This was in '50. I used to spend a lot of time in California. Both the chairman and I did, because, well, California was a very important state to us. It seemed to me that Helen's people, the people who were promoting her, were not very realistic in their approach to the enormity of this state. It wasn't like running in any other state.

Morris: Oh, now that's interesting. Why?

Edwards: Because it's so big. It's like two states.

Morris: Even more so than New York state at that point?

Edwards: Oh, yes. Much more so. There's no other state that is like this one.

Morris: Well, Californians tend to pride themselves on the variety.

Edwards: And the north and the south are--now, I don't know about now because I'm not active, but in those days there was great rivalry between the north and the south.

Morris: That was evident from where you sat on the National Committee?

Edwards: Yes. And Helen was not well known in the north. She had her group of idolaters in the south, but she didn't have very much support in the north. Because the bulk of the votes is in the south, that's the important part of the state to a candidate, yet you've got to make a dent in the north. It's a terrible state to cover.

Morris: Yes, it certainly is. You have to be two different people, at least.

Edwards: Yes. I mean, there are so many small towns. I hated to see her give up something that was sure; there wasn't a chance she could be defeated in the House. And, of course, I was not thinking at all about Richard Nixon, because none of us knew anything about him at that time.

Morris: You didn't see him as a threat?

Edwards: Well, he was in the House and he had been instrumental in bringing Alger Hiss to the court to be sentenced for perjury, but there was no real indication of the kind of campaign he was going to put on.

But I'll tell you something that a lot of other people didn't ever seem to think about, but which worried me terribly; it was Manchester Boddy who started that campaign against Helen.

Morris: Yes. Any idea why?

Edwards: No, I don't know, because I don't know him. But it seemed to me that if a man in her own party was going to conduct such a dirty campaign against her in the primary, that she'd have a bad time in the general election--because Boddy was handing Richard Nixon fuel to use against her.

Morris: Had Boddy had any previous political experience?

Edwards: I don't think so. I don't know. Was he a newspaperman?

Morris: He was, and he later went on and wrote a book about the Kennedys. That's my major contemporary awareness of him.

Edwards: I never met him. I don't know who he was. But I just know that he put on a very dirty campaign against Helen.

Morris: Yes.

Edwards: We at the DNC couldn't take part in that at all. We couldn't take part in a primary campaign.

Morris: Did you talk to Helen before she decided to--?

Edwards: Well, I talked to her from the standpoint of that she was giving up a great deal to gamble on winning the [nomination]. But Helen had a group of people around her--there was the one couple. I don't know what their name was. I've forgotten. I knew, of course, at the time. I think they ran her campaign. I said to them, "You know, Helen is risking so much." And I went on, "I just hate to see her do it."

And they said, "India, you don't understand California politics. There is an aura around Helen and she couldn't be defeated." Why! [Makes indignant sound.] That's rot!

Morris: [Laughter] You don't think that's realistic?

Edwards: I certainly don't! There was no "aura" around her and she could be defeated. But that was the attitude of, oh, hundreds of people who were around Helen. I don't know whether you knew her then or not.

Morris: No. You said she had her idolaters in the south.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: That sounds like she had a lot of people who were just devoted to Helen without any concern for the rest of the situation.

Edwards: Yes. And without any knowledge, without any--they had no feeling for politics, no instinct for it, and they just allowed their admiration and worship, it amounted to that, of Helen, to do away with whatever common sense they might have had.

Morris: Is that maybe a function of her theater background?

Edwards: I think so. I think she inspired this kind of thing.

#### Attitudes Toward Women in Politics

Edwards: And, you see, this is so typical of women in the House. I'm sure I could give you ten names of women who have been good Representatives in the House and who have then been carried away by the idea that they might become Senators, and every one of them has been defeated.

Morris: That's a very, very significant observation. Do you think some women are not very realistic when they get into politics?

Edwards: I think that a lot of them are not, and particularly the ones who are supporting them. You sit around and you're rather pleased with the job you're doing. You're doing your best and you think you're doing a pretty good job and you have a group surrounding you telling you that there never has been anybody in the Congress like you, that you are the greatest thing that has come to Washington since Abraham Lincoln, and you begin to think it's true.

Morris: Do men ever have that problem?

Edwards: Not very often, I think, because I don't think that they have the same kind of idolaters. [Laughter] But it's been very sad to me to see how many good women we've lost in the Congress because they aspired to become Senators.

Morris: Is it because they're trying too soon for the Senate?

Edwards: I think so. I would suppose that probably right now--I think probably Muriel Humphrey would have won if she had run--but that would have been partly emotional. I never for a moment thought Muriel would run. I would have been very surprised if she had. I thought she would accept the [appointment] to fill out the term, but I didn't think she'd run for another term. I think she would have been crazy if she had.

But I think that today women are accepted a little more as good candidates. In the old days it was so difficult to even get any money for a woman, you know. A woman was only given the nomination for a job that was supposed to be a dead one.

Morris: [Laughter] A dead job?

Edwards: One to which she'd stand no chance of being elected. But they'd nominate a woman for a job so they could say, "You see, we're not against women. We're for women. We're running this woman for secretary of state." But they'd know perfectly well that she never was going to be elected.

Morris: But they would put up money for that campaign?

Edwards: A little bit. Just a nominal amount. Or if she were elected, it wouldn't be a very important job and she wouldn't interfere with the work of the men.

Morris: Something I've always wondered about that: is this a conscious decision on the part of a group of men, or is it just something that happens because--?

Edwards: It has happened over the centuries and I hope it's growing less. I've been out of active politics for a long enough time so that I can't be sure, but I don't think it's lessened to the extent that it should. I truly think--now, maybe I'm wrong because perhaps young men feel differently--but I truly think that most men wish to God women didn't even have the vote.

Morris: [Chuckles] Even though they had to have voted for it in the first place?

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: Is this a cultural kind of thing?

Edwards: Yes, I think it is. And I do think that women have disappointed men in that they were afraid women were going to clean things up and they haven't done it. And even though the men would have fought them on it, yet they feel that the women aren't quite as good as they thought they were or they would have done it.

Morris: So that they still have women on a pedestal.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: Many men still think women should be better human beings than they are?

Edwards: Yes, yes.

Morris: That's an interesting supposition and one worth pursuing. The comment we've run across several times is that upon occasion, when elected and establishing a going political career, some women tend to do the same kind of close dealing that men have been charged with.

Edwards: I don't think there are very many of them, though. I think that on the whole, women are more honest than men. Now, that just may be because there haven't been very many of them [laughter] out in the public arena very long. But I have found in my dealings with men and women that most women are fundamentally honest and that they look carefully at a project or an idea to find out if it's straight. And I think that most of the women I've known who've been elected to office have been very straight.



Dealing with Campaign Dirty Tricks

- Morris: Going back to Helen's campaign for the Senate, were there really serious differences with Sheridan Downey, who was the incumbent Senator?
- Edwards: Oh, yes. He was very conservative. He was more of a Republican than he was a Democrat and he was really a very conservative man. I think that their voting records indicated a great difference in their philosophies.
- Morris: Yes. So that she was out to defeat him for the nomination.
- Edwards: Yes.
- Morris: Did that cause trouble within the Democratic party?
- Edwards: Well, yes, I'm sure it did. I don't know too much about that because, as I say, we in the National Committee had to keep out of the primary, so I wasn't out here during the primary.
- Morris: Yes. But you said you did spend time out here during the fall campaign.
- Edwards: Oh, during Helen's campaign I was here, I suppose off and on, half the time.
- Morris: Because of the severity of Nixon's attacks on her?
- Edwards: Yes, and not only on her but on others too. All the Democrats who were running were under terrible attack.
- Morris: That was the year that Jimmy Roosevelt ran for governor in California.
- Edwards: Well, he never stood any chance.
- Morris: That was Warren's third campaign for governor.
- Edwards: Yes, well, I never thought he [Roosevelt] stood any chance of being elected. But there were other people running for Congress who were having a very bad time. They [Republican candidates] all took their cue from Nixon.

Morris: Was what was going on in the California campaign worse than what was going on in other campaigns?

Edwards: No.

Morris: There were other dirty campaigns?

Edwards: There were other states that were even worse than California. But I think that the fact that the Democratic candidate was a woman and a spectacularly well-known woman made the difference. But there were dirty campaigns in 1950 that preceded the one here. In Florida, where Smathers defeated Pepper in the primary, that was a filthy campaign. Smathers used to work for Pepper. Pepper had brought him to Washington.

Morris: Oh, dear!

Edwards: Smathers was a bright young protege' of Claude Pepper's, but Smathers ran against Pepper and he called him a "pinko."

And then in North Carolina, Dr. Frank Graham, who had been appointed to the Senate upon the death of somebody--I've forgotten who it was who ran against him, but they ran a terrible campaign against him.

Morris: Willis Smith.

Edwards: It was a pattern, laid out for you right there, of the line they were going to use against the Democratic candidates.

Morris: What were the outlines of that pattern?

Edwards: Red. Commie.

Morris: Was it because of Dr. Graham's involvement in the sharecropper's fund?

Edwards: His liberalism. Yes. His feeling about civil rights. All of that entered into it. And if they didn't have the material, they made it up.

Well, if you read my book, you read about the one that I really had something to do with in exposing, the one against the Maryland Senator.\*

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\*Pulling No Punches, Memoirs of a Woman in Politics, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1977, chapter 14.

Morris: Tydings?

Edwards: Millard Tydings. But Millard Tydings was almost as conservative as the California Senator that Helen wanted to defeat. [Laughter] And he couldn't, by the wildest stretch of imagination, have been linked to anything subversive or liberal even. And yet they, you know--

[end of tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

Edwards: They faked a photograph to show him standing next to Earl Browder, who was head of the Communist party. And a lot of people saw it and couldn't tell it was a fake. Even though anyone with any sense should have known there was no way he'd be seen with that man.

After Tydings was defeated, I thought these things should be investigated, so I telephoned every Democratic Senator during the Christmas holidays. The Senate wasn't going to investigate these campaign dirty tricks but I was determined to see if they could be persuaded to do so. I had talked to Clinton Anderson and he finally said, at the Democratic caucus before the Congress convened, "I will move to investigate Butler if I know I can count on a majority of votes being with me." I told him just before the caucus that he would have the majority with him--the vote was unanimous!

In the information that came out, it seems that the publishers of the Times-Herald were behind it all and Jon Jonkel [John M. Butler's campaign manager] did go to prison. There was enough concern raised in the investigation that Joe McCarthy was publicly criticized for his part in stirring things up.

Morris: In the long run, do you think McCarthy's tactics had a lasting effect upon the Congress?

Edwards: Waving all his lists of how many communists there were in government! I don't think he caused anyone to lose their job, but he frightened a lot of people.

Morris: Do you think he was coaching Nixon, or encouraging him?

Edwards: Probably both. After all, Nixon hadn't been in Congress all that long and was looking for ways to get ahead.

But I didn't feel he was all that strong and I thought Helen should have run for office again to prove it. Not right away but after an interval, say after Nixon had lost his race for governor.

Edwards: She could have won her seat back in the House, I'm sure. I don't know why she didn't. Some people talked to her about running in New York, where they were living at the time, but I didn't think that was a good idea.

Vice-Presidential Possibilities, Political Workload, Appointments

Morris: I understand that both you and Helen were considered for the vice-presidential nomination at different conventions. [Mrs. Douglas in 1948 and Mrs. Edwards in 1952] Were those serious efforts?

Edwards: In my case it was, although it certainly wasn't something I wanted. But it was a hard spot to be in, when I had been so strong about advocating that more women should be in responsible political positions. There was a group of women who got together to work for my nomination. There were people supporting Sarah Hughes for the vice-presidential nomination that year too.

Morris: Who was in the group that wanted you to be nominated?

Edwards: It was Mary Norton who put the group together.

Morris: Why didn't you want to run?

Edwards: Because I was a happily married woman.

Morris: But you had been married for some time and also were doing a full-time political job.

Edwards: Well, my husband was maturer than most.

Morris: Is it your observation that a political career is hard on marriage?

Edwards: Terribly. The natural instinct for women is to consider the needs of their families as most important. It seemed to me that few of the women in Congress managed to put their children first, with all the responsibilities of campaigning and doing an elective job.

Morris: How about Helen Douglas? Would it have been easier for her, since Melvyn Douglas was also an established public figure in his own right?

Edwards: Well, they worked it out. I don't recall him being around Washington very much. And then, he was in the service.

Morris: How about campaigning? Would he have helped in her 1950 campaign?

Edwards: He was not around for that.

Morris: Do you recall if she had any feeling of being treated differently in the House because she was a woman?

Edwards: I would say that she was not aware of any important discrimination as a woman in Congress.

Morris: Would the fact that she was an experienced actress and used to being in public situations have anything to do with that?

Edwards: Yes, I imagine it might. But I do know that she found it hard to be a mother and in Congress. I don't know how she would have managed if it hadn't been for Evie Chavoor.

Morris: Who was she?

Edwards: She was Helen's right hand. Evie'd been with her for years-- absolutely devoted to Helen. She was the children's nursemaid first and then Helen's confidential secretary, and then in charge of Helen's office. Evie lived with them in Washington.

Morris: It sounds as if a woman in politics really needs another person to handle a lot of personal details, almost an alter ego, as it were. Is it ever possible for a husband to fill this role?

Edwards: Probably not. It's more like a wife. I remember Margaret Chase Smith saying once that what she really needed in the Senate was a wife.

Morris: After Helen's defeat in 1950, there were those who said she could never again be appointed so much as dogcatcher. But she did serve in the United Nations, didn't she?

Edwards: That was earlier. She was an alternate delegate to the UN during the second part of its first session, October-December, 1946. She served on the subcommittee establishing specialized agencies, such as the International Children's Relief Fund. Helen naturally was pushed into the limelight.

Morris: Yes. Because of her theater background?

Edwards: Her personality and her background and her beauty. But it's damned hard work to serve on one of those committees.

Morris: Of the UN?

Edwards: Yes. Terribly hard work. And it's for a limited period of time. Those people on those committees take home a stack of papers that high. [Gestures to indicate height.]

Edwards: Her assistant was Lorena Hickok. Lorena was a wonderful woman and she was a good writer, but Lorena, in a case like this, would not have been the best person to be helping Helen. I'll have to tell you one thing about Lorena to make you understand why I say that.

I took Lorena's job at the Committee. She wasn't very well and she left, and they offered me the job professionally. I had been a volunteer. And after I had been there for a couple of weeks, Gladys Tillett, who was then director of the Women's Division and vice-chairman, said, "I just can't get over the amount of work you do in here, the things you start in a day and finish that day." She said, "Hick was wonderful, but it took her a whole day to do one little thing. After she had done one thing, she was finished for that day."

I said, "But she'd been a reporter all her life." I said, "That's all a reporter does is write one story and then they're finished." I said, "I was a reporter for a comparatively short time. I was an editor. And there's a big difference. I couldn't do one story and then be finished for the day. I had to work on a dozen, you know, or see that they were rewritten, or that they were together." So, I said, "That's why I can do a lot more."

So, from that standpoint, I can see where Lorena wouldn't have been the best person to be backup for Helen.

Morris: On a committee that took that kind of work.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: In addition to her regular work in the Congress, which would be a heavy load too.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: That's interesting. Did Helen share your interest in, and did you ever work together in getting other women appointed to various things?

Edwards: Well, I don't know. I can't remember anybody particularly, no. I suppose I would ask her opinion about California women. But I can't think of anybody that we ever worked particularly on to get appointed to anything, because I would work with the national committeewoman and the state chairman or vice-chairman, for California appointments.

Other Leading California Democrats

Morris: Right. It was Helen and then it was Elinor Heller.

Edwards: Yes. I worked with Ellie, you see. [1948-1952]

Morris: Yes.

Edwards: Helen was in the Congress when I went with the Committee.

Morris: Yes. Was Mrs. Heller--?

Edwards: I think Helen was elected in '44.

Morris: Yes, because 1940-44 she was Democratic national committeewoman.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: And she wouldn't be committeewoman and congresswoman.

Edwards: She would resign, wouldn't she?

Morris: Yes. It isn't very often, is it, that a national committeewoman will then decide to run for office? Aren't those usually separate roles?

Edwards: W-e-ell [word drawn out in contemplative tone], you couldn't say that. A great many of them do.

Morris: What I was wondering is if Ellie Heller had similar ideas about getting women into office?

Edwards: Oh, I don't think so. I think Ellie had very different ideas about politics than Helen and I, for instance.

Morris: Did Bill Malone support Helen in the 1950 primary?

Edwards: No.

Morris: Ah, okay. So, was it a north-south kind of a thing?

Edwards: Yes. Helen had very little support in the north.

Morris: Do you suppose it was because of her liberal politics, or because she was a Hollywood actress and--?

Edwards: Both.

- Morris: Did you ever do any work to try and build some kind of unanimity in California? You talked about being concerned about--
- Edwards: Well, yes, I used to travel around the state [laughter], holding schools of politics! [Laughter] Well, I never met so many individualists as I did in California! [Laughter]
- Morris: [Laughter] More so than other states?
- Edwards: Oh, yes! There was no Democratic party as such really here until Liz Snyder took over as chairman. Liz consolidated the party.
- Morris: Yes. But would you have had any acquaintance at all with Culbert Olson who was governor from 1938 to '42?
- Edwards: No. You see, he was before my time.
- Morris: That was before you.
- Edwards: Yes. No, it was a pretty wide open thing when I came in.

#### Regional Factions

- Edwards: And the south and the north didn't care much for each other and they met as seldom as possible.
- Morris: Yes. But in politics in general, you hear about the urban versus the rural, Chicago and downstate, and that sort of thing.
- Edwards: Yes. Well, that's true in many states.
- Morris: Is it similar to the north-south split?
- Edwards: Yes. It's the same kind of thing.
- Morris: Yes. And it goes on in any geographical area.
- Edwards: And then there's jealousy. There's great jealousy. You have to be careful. You can't, for instance, pick a judge from Northern California if you've just picked one from Northern California. You must select one from the north and then the next one must come from the south.
- Morris: That used to happen with the state chairman too.
- Edwards: Yes. Go back and forth.



Morris: It went one way or the other.

Edwards: Yes. And in the same way in the cities, in a state like Illinois, Chicago, and downstate; New York City and upstate.

Morris: Yes.

Edwards: Massachusetts and Texas were the two states that had no semblance of a state organization, none whatsoever. Every candidate had his own organization. And I laughed when Jack and Lyndon ran together. [Laughter] I said, "You couldn't have found two men from two states that were less understanding of national politics." And that was really true. They had cutthroat politics of the worst order in both those states.

Morris: It makes me wonder if the view from outside is that California also has cutthroat politics.

Edwards: Well, I don't think so. At least, we didn't used to feel that way. We felt that California politicians were a bit naive [laughter] more than cutthroat.

Morris: When they came to Washington?

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: Well, California politicians tend to say that when they get to Washington, they feel like they're treated like kids from the sticks.

Edwards: Yes. Well, they behave like that! [Laughter]

Morris: I keep coming back to your feeling that California didn't really have a Democratic organization.

Edwards: Well, it may have earlier. I perhaps shouldn't say that because I can only judge by the time I knew it. And, of course, I wasn't in politics during the days of Governor Olson.

Morris: Yes. Well, I was thinking of before Liz Snyder, you know, Bill Malone is spoken of with awe as the strong man in the Democratic party.

Edwards: In the north, but not in the south.

Morris: But it was a one-man operation? There wasn't much of an organization to back him up?

Edwards: He was the boss in the north. Now, the south was different. There were three or four men down there. This John Anson Ford, for instance.

Morris: Yes. He was kind of a bi-partisan type, wasn't he? I think Warren appointed him to--

Edwards: Yes. But he was a Democrat. He was Democratic national committeeman.

Morris: Yes.

Edwards: There were a couple of others whose names I ought to remember. These were people that preceded Paul Ziffren.

Morris: There's Ed Pauley.

Edwards: Well, yes. I would doubt that Ed Pauley was ever considered by Californians as being a political leader. He was a great fund raiser and a big giver, but I don't think he was a Democrat that the California Democrats were too proud of.

Morris: He's also associated with the oil interests, which have been very touchy in California.

Edwards: Yes. Of course, Ed Pauley was treasurer of the committee for a while. I think Ed Pauley was treasurer of the committee when I went with the committee, but soon after that he left. I guess Truman appointed him Secretary of the Navy, didn't he? But he had to withdraw the appointment.

Morris: Yes. And then, for reasons that I don't understand, he was appointed head of the reparations commission that dealt with Russia in '47.

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: I assumed it was a political appointment.

Edwards: Oh, yes. It was.

Morris: And yet it's a touchy kind of a thing to be--

Edwards: Well, it was because of the fact that Truman had had to withdraw his name as Secretary of the Navy because Harold Ickes had fought it so.

Morris: Because of Pauley's position in the oil industry?

Edwards: Yes.

Morris: And the reparations commission didn't come to much.

Edwards: No. And yet it gave Pauley a prestige and--

Morris: Yes. One of the men who went on that with Pauley seemed to feel that Pauley had been brought into that commission because it was too left-wing and that it was to redress the balance.

Edwards: Probably so. I don't know who else was on that commission. Isidore Lubin, I think, was on that commission. He's the only one I can think of. And he would be considered pretty left-wing.

Morris: From the California point of view, or any?

Edwards: Well, from the Washington point of view. But I don't think that he was a Californian, was he?

Morris: I don't think so.

Edwards: No, I don't think he was either. I don't know where he came from.

#### In Summary

Morris: We're getting just about to the end of the tape, and I wonder if there are some things I haven't asked you about that you'd like to add, either about working with Helen Gahagan Douglas or about the role of women in political life.

Edwards: Well, as I say, I feel that Helen's was a tremendous loss to the Congress, but I can see why she didn't want to run again, although I think she could have been elected, not to the Senate, but I think she could have come back and run for her old seat.

And I think Helen is an absolute angel. I think she's been too angelic about Richard Nixon. When I think of the dreadful things he said about her and did to her, I don't see how Helen could possibly not, at some time, have said something publicly about him, and I think she should have. I think she should, at some stage of the game, have told the American people what this man was like. There would have been a lot who would not have listened to her and a lot who would have just said, "Oh, well, what would you expect from her?" But there would have been a lot who would have listened.

- Edwards: The fact that that man was elected president of the United States in 1972 is a national disgrace and I think everybody that had anything to do with allowing it to happen ought to be ashamed, and I think Helen should have spoken out then against him.
- Morris: There have been those who have said that about California politics in general. There were other people who had stories to tell about Nixon and--
- Edwards: Yes. Did they ever speak out?
- Morris: No.
- Edwards: I never found anybody in the East who, after the gubernatorial campaign, even knew that there'd be an injunction against Haldeman and Nixon for dirty work in the campaign.
- Morris: Yes. And earlier than that there was a man named Murray Chotiner, who had worked with Nixon in California.
- Edwards: Oh, well I knew Murray Chotiner.
- Morris: And there were people who did not want anything to do with Chotiner, but they never spoke out during earlier elections.
- Edwards: Yes. I don't know why people fear a skunk like Richard Nixon.
- Morris: Probably part of it, as you said about the investigation of the elections--is that sometimes people are afraid that they'll have it turned on them in politics.
- Edwards: Yes. But as far as women in politics, I am very, very sad about the situation today. I can't speak about the Republicans because I don't really know enough about them. I know some wonderful Republican women leaders. I know a couple of Republican women that I would vote for for president if they ran.
- Morris: Would you like to put them on the record?
- Edwards: No. We Democrats have some women, too, that I would vote for, would gladly support. But I think they're very few and I can't think of any that have been appointed by Carter that I think are outstanding.
- Morris: And yet he seems to have a good working relationship with his wife and to feel that women have a place in public affairs.
- Edwards: Yes. But I don't think he has any real understanding of the power of women. They're not doing a thing at the National Committee for

- Edwards: women. The two top women at the National Committee--one is from Georgia and one is from California, and as far as I can see, neither is a leader.
- Morris: They're not continuing the educational work on issues.
- Edwards: Oh, no, no, no! I don't know what they do. They have no staff. They have no budget. So, there's not very much they can do. And they aren't leaders.
- Morris: The current image is that much of the party activity is confined to finance.
- Edwards: It's all! That's the only thing they're interested in, which is very sad.
- Morris: You would wonder if the money might come easier if people had more feeling of understanding.
- Edwards: I think it's very sad that so many people today feel that it doesn't make any difference whether it's a Democrat or a Republican; they're all the same. There should be a very great difference in the philosophy of the two parties. If there isn't, why, God help us!
- Morris: Do you feel that the two parties are closer together than they were when you were involved in Democratic National Committee affairs?
- Edwards: Yes, I do. I feel they are because I don't think we've had strong presidents.
- Morris: To define an area of difference.
- Edwards: Yes. There hasn't been a strong president in the White House since Truman.
- Morris: Yes. And he was unexpected.
- Edwards: Yes. But he turned out to be a strong president. Lyndon Johnson was a good president. Because of his troubles over Vietnam, people tend to forget that he did more for domestic legislation than anyone, even Franklin Roosevelt, but he didn't follow through well.

Eisenhower was a do-nothing president and Kennedy--it's not fair to make a judgement on him because he was there too short a time. He brought a breath of fresh air and charm to things, even if the trash that's said about him is ninety percent true.

Edwards: I feel sorry for Pat Nixon, and few people know how much she did in restoring the White House interior. Jackie Kennedy got a lot of publicity for starting the restoration, but I've been told by people on the White House staff that Pat Nixon really got more done.

Morris: The tape is just about through. Thank you for sharing your experience with us.

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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Leo Goodman

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND HER WORK  
WITH LABOR ON HOUSING AND ATOMIC ENERGY

An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
in 1976

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LEO GOODMAN



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Although his voice was calm and restrained, Leo Goodman's recounting of his experiences with Helen Gahagan Douglas was far from dispassionate, because they had worked together--he a representative of the Legislative Committee of the CIO, she a congresswoman--on issues that were very close to the hearts of both. He was particularly interested in sharing his information with me because he had once tried to put together a book on what happened in the 1950 campaign, but found contributors difficult to move to action.

In his home in northwest Washington, Mr. Goodman--now retired--and I sat in front of a blazing fire on a cold winter day, December 21, 1976. There were books, to which he referred, on the coffee table; and he had spread out more books and papers on his dining room table. We talked all afternoon, often referring to documents.

Just before the library and shops on Connecticut Avenue closed, we hurried out into the wind to find a xerox machine to duplicate some of the documents. The one at the public library was broken, so we hurried on to find another. Although only the telegram from Albert Einstein supporting Helen Gahagan Douglas's position on civilian control of atomic energy appears with this transcript, the other documents are part of Leo Goodman's story and are with the Helen Gahagan Douglas papers at the University of Oklahoma. The xeroxes we made that afternoon are in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

As willingly as he had offered his memories and the supporting documents, Mr. Goodman went over the transcript, clarifying and approving it.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

26 May 1978  
Takoma Park, Maryland



II HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND HER WORK WITH LABOR  
ON HOUSING AND ATOMIC ENERGY

[Interview 1: December 26, 1976]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Leo Goodman, Trade Unionist

- Ingersoll: Mr. Goodman, before we get started talking about Helen Gahagan Douglas and your association with her, tell me just a little bit about yourself and the sort of background you had at the time you met Helen Gahagan Douglas.
- Goodman: I've worked virtually all of my working life for the trade unions of this country. I began in New England and became research director of the United Shoe Workers in the very early 1930s, and moved on down to Washington in 1934, where I began working closely also with the problems of the national CIO, and shortly after its formation and structure, I became active in its Legislative Committee. I have spent approximately forty years working with and around the Congress of the United States.
- Ingersoll: Am I right that at one point you worked with the UAW [United Auto Workers]?
- Goodman: I worked with a variety of unions, starting with the shoe workers. I then became representative of the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Workers. I then worked with the national CIO and various of its committees (which I'll discuss later), and subsequently became associated with Walter Reuther and his activities. Through that association, I became an employee of the United Automobile Workers. Subsequent to that, after the merger of the CIO and the AFL I worked with the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO, which was the successor to the old CIO.
- Ingersoll: Did any of this take you to California, or was this all Washington-based?
- Goodman: Well, I spent a great deal of time on the road.
- Ingersoll: In many different states?

Goodman: In many different states. In most of these assignments, we were working to influence the Congress, and therefore we developed a grassroots understanding of our political activity. Therefore, I was fairly constantly on the road. I worked for the UAW, the AFL-CIO, the CIO, the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Workers, the United Gas, Coke, and Chemical Workers, and was the legislative advisor to the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers. All of these had membership in California, as well as in many other states, and I was especially interested in California and have been out there many, many, many times, both during the period we're talking about and since.

I met Helen Douglas here in Washington. I was not associated with her first campaign for election to the House.

Ingersoll: What was your impression of her when you first met her?

Goodman: I knew from the very beginning that she was very closely tied to the Roosevelts in the White House, that she really was a protégé of Eleanor Roosevelt's and that she espoused the programs of the New Deal.

I was active in the Legislative Committee of the CIO, which at that time was the most active trade union group in the Congress in a whole variety of issues that she was interested in, for the reason that the CIO very closely supported Franklin Roosevelt's program. She and Eleanor Roosevelt were very closely associated in pushing that program.

Ingersoll: Was Eleanor Roosevelt at all involved in your beginning to work with Helen Gahagan Douglas?

Goodman: No, not directly. No, I was assigned in a variety of fields within the CIO Legislative Committee. I covered all child welfare issues, and I was specifically assigned as executive secretary of the national CIO Housing Committee. Helen Gahagan Douglas's files at the University of Oklahoma mistakenly identify me as the chairman of the committee. The chairman was Walter Reuther. I was merely the executive secretary.

#### Work with Helen Gahagan Douglas on Housing

Ingersoll: You were executive secretary of the Housing Committee. Could you say a little bit in general about your impressions of Mrs. Douglas when you knew her in those days? What would you feel about her--



Ingersoll: her assets, her liabilities, as a woman in politics?

Goodman: After forty years' work in Congress, I think that she was the best House member that I knew. She knew what it took to pick up a difficult issue--and she picked up the difficult issues, you can be sure--and to lobby and campaign for them, and to bring the important issues to the forefront even though many of her colleagues were hiding behind obfuscations.

For example, I was associated with Fiorella La Guardia in that period. We established a committee called the National Fair Rent Committee, of which La Guardia was chairman and I was secretary, because approximately four million veterans were returning from the war zones--

Ingersoll: This would be mid-forties?

Goodman: Starting at the end of '45--and looking for homes and wanting to marry their sweethearts. They were urgently in need of housing. The first problem was, should there be a runaway in rent; it would be impossible both for the underprivileged in this country and returning veterans to afford a place to live. Helen picked up that issue, and she was most actively aggressive. I worked with her on the introduction of bills on rent control and, more importantly, we moved over to the subject of having to increase the supply of housing available in the country.

At that time, we had a rather narrow-minded bloc in the leadership of the House of Representatives. The key committee was the Rules Committee, who were actively opposed to any governmental intervention in these problems. The only way to move legislation forward was by route of what was called the "discharge petition." You had to have signatures of 218 members of the House discharging the committee from consideration of a particular piece of legislation.

I worked for many months with Helen on a campaign to get those 218 signatures.

Ingersoll: Was there anyone else working to get the signatures to discharge the bill?

Goodman: Dozens of organizations. But she performed the key role. I published a weekly list at the time of those who had signed the discharge petition. The only way you could get access to the list was to be a congressman and look at the petition and see who had signed it and also who had taken their names off.

Ingersoll: Oh! It was possible for them to sign and then rescind their names?

Goodman: Right.

Ingersoll: Was that happening at any great rate?

Goodman: Which was a double-dealing character. Yes, it did happen. Helen and I worked weekly on the preparation of my published list. That list became the crucial force for the ultimate passage of the housing act in '49, [National Housing Act of 1949], under which about fifty million homes have since been built.

Ingersoll: Yes, that was crucial housing legislation, certainly. Whose idea was the weekly publication of such a list?

Goodman: It was mine, but Helen was the crucial source of information. Not only did she have what it takes to introduce a bill, to campaign for it aggressively, but also to lobby effectively for it so that we built up enough of a head of steam across the country. All of the organizations--the Catholic church was in this, the League of Women Voters--et cetera--oh, I could give you a long list of thirty organizations that participated in the effort to try to get this bill. It was a very key bill, because this was the bill, in my opinion, that reelected Harry Truman in 1948.

Ingersoll: It was that crucial an issue!

Goodman: He had kept pushing the bill all through the year, and the House leadership and the House Rules Committee had blocked it. And at the last minute, Joe McCarthy had come in and introduced a substitute, meaningless bill which Harry Truman later characterized in his campaign as the "teensy-weensy" housing bill.

Ingersoll: That was the one that had no slum clearance and that sort of thing that was so much needed, right?

Goodman: That's right. That became the issue. I had a long session with Harry Truman. After the Republican convention, I went to him and said, "You call a special session, and let's put the Republicans on the spot. They said "in their convention campaign pledge," they're for solving these problems. And he did. In my opinion, that was the decisive act in his reelection in '48 when everybody said he had lost to Tom Dewey.

Ingersoll: That's very interesting.

Goodman: It was Helen's work that laid the basis for our whole activity in this field.

Ingersoll: To go back just a little bit to how your association with Helen on this particular legislation started out, had you gone to her with your concerns or had she called you in?

Goodman: I don't remember the precise basis. But I was assigned by the CIO Legislative Committee to work with the Congress, and she responded most. I worked most closely with her, and she was in and out of her office, and worked with her and Evie Chavoor [office manager for Helen Douglas] constantly. That was a long, interesting period.

There were other issues working simultaneously that I was interested in. Of course, after '45 we were all interested in atomic energy.

#### Control of Atomic Energy

Ingersoll: Oh, that was a concern of yours too? Atomic energy was very important, of course, to Helen Douglas.

Goodman: It was the CIO committee to whom the scientists came from Oak Ridge and Los Alamos and the Argonne Laboratory of the University of Chicago, wondering what the Pentagon was doing about legislation. Came the end of the war, the Pentagon sought to take complete control of atomic science, and the scientists had had a great deal of trouble with their military directors, particularly General Leslie R. Groves. We were able to secure, through the Legislative Committee [CIO] contacts on the Hill, a copy of the draft bill which had been prepared by the Pentagon, which later came to be known as the May-Johnson bill. This provided for complete control by the military of atomic science.

We provided the room and the mimeograph machine and the advice to the earliest group of scientists that came in. We ultimately formed a committee similar to what I told you we had in the housing field. It was called the Committee on Atomic Information. We had to bring about some alternate proposed legislation, and it was Helen who ultimately introduced the bill, and led the fight for us, and tipped over the whole of the Pentagon program--Helen in the House and Senator Brien McMahon in the Senate. It was the most dramatic year, in my opinion--'46, '47--in which a political issue became a big, national, public debate. It was the hottest issue of the time.

Ingersoll: The repercussions of something like that could be endless, really.

Ingersoll: Can you remember any way that Helen particularly operated, moved, worked for this new legislation?

Goodman: I have a few clippings out of the files. I wasn't able to find my own file, but I found the material which was out of the University of Oklahoma file.

Ingersoll: Any of those things that you can find within the next few weeks or months I'd very much like to put in as an appendix.

Goodman: I have a whole batch laid out on a table back here.\*

I think the most significant thing that's not known publicly is that Albert Einstein, who became chairman for a while of the Committee on Atomic Information, specifically guided and endorsed Helen's activities.

Ingersoll: No, I hadn't heard anything about that at all.

Goodman: Somewhere I have a copy of his telegram of final endorsement of her bill.

Then she worked with this group which later came to be known as the Federation of Atomic Scientists, which was a scientific group. Then we had a broad citizens committee, in addition. Einstein was chairman for a while, and then the usual problem came up. This was a problem that came up on which Helen as well as many others fell, and that was the accusation of being communist or pro-communist. How ridiculous it looks from today, looking back on it!

---

\*Documents which Leo Goodman felt were important as illustrative of the importance of the atomic energy control issue while Helen Douglas was working on legislation are: Telegram from Albert Einstein to Helen Gahagan Douglas, 21 November 1945; Letter from Engineers and Architects Association of Southern California to Repr. Helen Gahagan Douglas, 26 February 1946; "May-Johnson Bill Is Pushed in House," New York Times, 6 March 1946; Telegram from Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions to Repr. Helen Gahagan Douglas, 19 June 1946; Telegram from Church Federation of Los Angeles to Helen Gahagan Douglas, 11 March 1946; Letter from Chet Holifield, congressman from California, to Helen Gahagan Douglas, 6 July 1946; Letter from International Union, UAW-CIO, to Helen Gahagan Douglas, 23 July 1946, enclosing a resolution adopted by the International Executive Board of the UAW-CIO on the question of atomic energy; Letter from AFL Atomic Trades and Labor Council to Helen Gahagan Douglas, 6 July 1946, enclosing letter from AFL Unions at Oak Ridge, Tenn., to Lt. Col. Curtis A. Nelson, 2 July 1946. Xerox copies of these are on file in The Bancroft Library of the University of California.

Ingersoll: And yet, in the temper of those times, it was something that got under people's skin like nothing else.

Goodman: Right. I was very heartbroken at the time by the impact it had on her. Remaining as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee she could have been a tremendous force for good in the subsequent history of this country. She'd have been in there today and been chairman of the committee for years.

Lasting Impact of Helen Gahagan Douglas's Work: Housing Act, Committee on Lobbying Activities, Foreign Policy

Ingersoll: I think many of the people who were close to her felt that way. People are always saddened when their candidates lose, but I have the feeling that people who worked with Helen Gahagan Douglas felt a particular blow when she lost at that time because they could see the implications for the future if she had--

Goodman: The tragedy was that she chose on a more narrow basis than many people know and understand. She had been dedicated heart and soul to the development of the Central Valley of California. That was part of a campaign, which actually started back with Abraham Lincoln, to establish "family farms" in this country.

Ingersoll: Small farms rather than the large ones.

Goodman: The rule was adopted, I believe by Abraham Lincoln, establishing 240 acres as the rule. Her campaign turned against Sheridan Downey who, as senator from California, proved that he was aligned with the big landowners and the big agribusiness developers. They clashed head-on on whether or not one supported the family farm as against the great big agricultural interests owning tens of thousands of acres.

In my opinion, she chose to oppose Sheridan Downey, knowing that there was a possibility that it would bring an end to her political career. But she was determined to try to defeat him for reelection. Her efforts resulted in his defeat and withdrawal from politics. So she achieved one of her broader purposes, though many people who also had other interests were heartbroken at her removal from the congressional scene.

I'm going to tell you something that's going to surprise you, because not many people were as close, I think, to aspects of the situation as I was. She made positive contributions that had lasting impact. One was the housing act that I told you

Goodman: about. Not many people know, but the rent control was very important. Fiorella La Guardia and I met with her on a number of occasions. He was guided by her and, in my opinion, it was his action that was decisive in preventing the runaway inflation that would have occurred. Had controls been taken off of rents, it would have given a great boost to inflation in the postwar period.

Ingersoll: There were two de-controls. Twice, there were de-controls of rents, weren't there, during that late '48 period? Then it must have been that Helen's efforts kept that from going further than it had.

Goodman: I remember the session in which Fiorello and I sat in the office of Arthur Vandenberg who was making a big campaign about peace in the world. He had shifted over from being an isolationist to supporting Truman's foreign policy at the time. I remember Fiorello turning to Vandenberg at one point and saying, "Arthur, all of your efforts for peace in the world will go down the drain if we have riots in the streets here because of the effects of de-controlling the rents." And a very stupid man whose name slips me at the moment--we're talking about a long time ago.

Ingersoll: Thirty years. Was this an aide to Vandenberg, perhaps?

Goodman: A son-in-law of the Du Ponts, representing Delaware in the Senate, had reported out of his subcommittee a bill to end rent control by something like a vote of seven to two. This discussion in Vandenberg's office, I believe after a consultation with Helen, with La Guardia carrying the ball, resulted in Vandenberg reversing himself and issuing an order to his colleagues to reverse this stupid bill, and the bill was referred back from the full committee back to a subcommittee by a vote of something like eleven to three. (These are memory figures; don't hold me precisely.)

Ingersoll: Yes. Those are the sorts of things we can look up.

Goodman: Something like seven to two changed in full committee to three to eleven. I don't know that this is recorded anywhere publicly, but it may be.

And rent control was continued. Now, I believe this was in the spring of '46. I went up to Wilmington, Delaware, and we got every last tenant in that city to know what the senator had done. Then his reelection came up that November. Life magazine subsequently had a great big spread. Life had a picture of the tents and the food that was scheduled for the celebration of his reelection, unused, because we defeated him on this one issue.

Ingersoll: And your thought is that Vandenberg's change of vote came after the meeting with you and Fiorella La Guardia, and also after consultation with Helen Douglas?

Goodman: Right.

Ingersoll: Were you by any chance in the House when she made her Market Basket speech, when she was working so hard for rent control and needed to show very graphically that food had gone up so terribly much when food control prices had been taken off?

Goodman: I was working down in the lobby among the members. So many members, they knew the issues! But unless the lobbies pressured-- my colleagues operated on the theory that the only way you get an upright legislator in the Congress is to maximize the pressure on him from all sides. [Laughter] Otherwise, one side or the other is bound to push him over on his face.

Ingersoll: Do you have any recollection of what the response in Congress was to that Market Basket speech of Helen Douglas?

Goodman: That's taxing my memory. It's getting too specific.

Ingersoll: The reason I asked was that Juanita Terry Barbee, who worked so hard with Helen Gahagan Douglas and Evelyn Chavoor, said that she and others had been very disappointed at that time with the response that Helen had gotten from Congress, that people just hadn't paid the kind of attention that all of their work to get through all of the figures had deserved--

Goodman: That means there was a great big drive in the party leadership-- both parties were involved in it--to terminate all the wartime controls. We were fighting a very tough, uphill act. About this time, I was also chosen as secretary of the Cost of Living Committee of the CIO, which really was a mandate to try to prevent inflation. We were in all of these difficult situations on the Hill.

John McCormack, while pretending to be a New Deal Democrat, was ardently for the elimination of controls, and he was a tough one to buck. And the Rules Committee was tough to buck.

Ingersoll: Did Helen Gahagan Douglas ever go to work on somebody like McCormack when she felt strongly about something like this?

Goodman: Oh yes, yes!

Ingersoll: Did you ever see anything like that in action?

Goodman: I had a fascinating experience. One day I was late for a meeting. It was raining. The Hill wasn't as crowded as it is now, and I drove a little old Chevy I had right up to the back of the Longworth Building. I walked in through the porticoes—do you know where the arches are?

Ingersoll: Yes.

Goodman: That's where the folding room is. To my amazement, they had stacked, from the floor to the ceiling, along the corridor to the Cannon Building, the greatest stack of reprints I had ever seen. Being the typically nosy guy, I reached into a couple of the packets and pulled out copies. (I've forgotten whether I was on the UAW payroll at this time.) But I was startled to find a reprint of an article put in the appendix of the Congressional Record of a speech by the chief economist of the Chrysler Corporation against rent control. I said to myself, "What in the hell is Chrysler Corporation interesting itself in rent control for?!" So I walked along this stack and noticed, from the copy of the envelope on each bundle, that there were six or eight different speeches. It turned out to be a virtual tirade against the entire program on which Harry Truman had just been reelected in '48. (This must have been in December of '48 or January of '49. Let me get a volume. [Pause])

Ingersoll: There are one, two, three, four, five volumes here, which are a transcript of what followed after that. You had just said that you saw the statement from Chrysler and other people against the housing legislation.

Goodman: This is how the CIO News handled the front page. Here's the picture of the stacks, and these were being taken into the folding room and put together—sets made up—and into mail sacks. [Looking through CIO News] These are the young ladies looking at the mail sacks. All funded, financed, directed by the radical right to try to kill the entire program on which Truman had just been reelected. This is dated February, so—

Ingersoll: February 28, 1949. CIO News.

Goodman: What I'm about to tell you occurred mainly in January, when I first found all this. I went to John McCormack with all of this, and John McCormack called in Helen Douglas and asked Helen to make the first preliminary investigation of what this was all about. Out of that came a resolution setting up a lobbying committee. [Looking through files] Somewhere here is my memorandum to Walter Reuther. Reuther took my memo, plus Helen's memorandum



- Goodman: to--oh yes, here it is--to John McCormack, and they met with Harry Truman. Out of it, a lobby investigative committee was established back in 1950 in the House of Representatives. And that's what this is. [Referring to documents]
- Ingersoll: House Select Committee on Lobbying Activities. This is just the 1950 volume, the first volume, and there are four others that follow that, is that right?
- Goodman: That's right.
- Ingersoll: Five all together.
- Goodman: There were many reports; this is just the bound set. Here I have the speeches that were stacked. There were 450,000 copies of the speech on rent control inserted in the Congressional Record by Congressman Ralph W. Gwinn. He was also the general counsel of J.C. Penney and a member of Congress from Westchester County, and the most backward-looking right-winger that we had in the Congress for thirty years. [Reading] "A Free Economy" inserted by Ralph W. Gwinn. "Federal Aid and Control of Education" by Ralph W. Gwinn. "How Public Housing is Disastrous Here and Abroad" by Ralph W. Gwinn. "Minimum Wage Standards: Implications of Federal Aid to and Control of Education."
- I believe there were something like eight million reprints altogether being scattered at federal expense. These bundles were all addressed to the Committee on Constitutional Government, a right-wing, anti-New Deal group in New York City, for addressing, to be sent through the mails free, over congressional frank, after the defeat of the Republican party on these very same issues by Harry Truman just a few months before.
- Ingersoll: Was Helen then charged at this time by McCormack with doing an investigation of this kind of thing?
- Goodman: Yes--laying the basis for setting up this investigation. The committee that was appointed was Carl Albert--
- Ingersoll: Were you involved in that investigation, then, that Helen was charged with doing?
- Goodman: Well, as I told you, it was both her looking into it--and she made the estimate as to how much it would cost the government (she got a figure from the staff there) to send all this out for the radical right. Charles Halleck, who became Republican leader was another committee member.

Goodman: Instead of her being appointed--I've never understood why (of course, she was involved in these other things)--Clyde Doyle, who was her colleague and the man who came from the district next to hers in California was put on that committee.

Ingersoll: Your feeling was that Helen Douglas should have been put on instead of Doyle.

Goodman: She should have been made chairman. But I am sure it was John McCormack--well, I really don't know; I shouldn't say. But McCormack appointed the most inadequate person, a man you've never heard of (Frank Buchanan) as chairman. This could have been a much more important investigation.

Ingersoll: Do you think there was any reason why Helen Douglas wasn't at least appointed if not made chairman?

Goodman: I don't know, I don't know. She should have been. But it was McCormack who asked her to do the preliminary work. Between what I had found and what she was able to dig out, Walter Reuther interested Harry Truman, and a committee was appointed and had extensive hearings.

Ingersoll: An important thing, to begin.

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

Goodman: She had so many different interests. But she was on the Foreign Policy Committee in the House, and was a great resource. She worked very closely with Eleanor Roosevelt whom you remember was on the U.S. Delegation at the U.N. It was very interesting that there was a program recently about that, pointing out how both Senators Tom Connally and Arthur Vandenberg, who had originally resented her being appointed, came to rely on Eleanor as the most effective member of the delegation in the early phases of the United Nations, particularly on the Committee on Human Rights, working for the Human Rights Resolution. And Helen worked very closely with her [Eleanor Roosevelt] on foreign policy issues at the time and was making a great impact on the foreign policy issues. But she had many other interests and I believe, as I said earlier, she made the choice of being willing to go down totally in politics on this one issue of the Central Valley family farm campaign. And she did bring about the termination of Sheridan Downey's Senate career.

1950 Campaign: Importance of Central Valley to Helen Gahagan Douglas, Communist Issue, Affect of Catholic Church on Labor Vote

- Ingersoll: That was an interesting and rather sad part of the whole senatorial campaign even though it did, perhaps, make the family farm more of a possibility.
- Goodman: Well, that's not been totally achieved either. But I went back in the files and found some of the exchanges about and with Sheridan Downey.
- Ingersoll: Oh! You have some of those things. Good.
- Goodman: Here are some clippings of December, 1949. "Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas paid Oroville a brief visit yesterday and said that the Oroville Dam should be made part of the integrated Central Valley Project and constructed as soon as possible."
- Ingersoll: Let's see. What are you reading from now?
- Goodman: This is a clipping from the Oroville, California Mercury of December 17, 1949. She said, "Since the Feather River is the largest undeveloped source of water in the state, it certainly should be brought into beneficial use as soon as possible." And that's been done. It was done by Governor Brown [Pat] later. And, "Mrs. Douglas complimented the people of Oroville for pushing the project since, she said, it would prove beneficial to all of the state and not only to the local interests. The visiting congresswoman stopped at the Oroville Chamber of Commerce and was taken to the dam site by a group including a local newspaperman and a Bureau of Reclamation engineer and was greeted by Mrs. Helen Good, woman's chairman of the Butte County Democratic Central Committee. She went to Chico from here and today is scheduled to visit the hydroelectric project of the Shasta Dam."
- Ingersoll: That really was very important to her, wasn't it?
- Goodman: Right. And when I was interested in getting out a book about all her...
- Ingersoll: Yes, I'd like to go on and talk about your ideas for a book about her.
- Goodman: In the whole Watergate business, hundreds of speakers referred to how Nixon treated her, but nobody had the details. At one point, a radio commentator and newspaperman agreed to write a book about her. He made arrangements to use the materials

Goodman: at the University of Oklahoma, and the people told me they made all kinds of preparations for his coming and he never did. He never showed up and did only a very superficial book. I'm talking about Frank Mankiewicz.

Ingersoll: Oh yes. I've seen his Perfectly Clear.

Goodman: He wrote Perfectly Clear mainly about the fact that he was on the same ticket running for some subordinate office and then had virtually nothing about the real details of the Douglas-Nixon fight.

Ingersoll: As I remember, he did have some chronology of the smears, but there could have been a great deal more, I'm sure. How do you feel about...

Goodman: The Los Angeles Neighborhood News, May 25, 1950: "Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt Lends Her Support to Helen Douglas. 'Congresswoman Helen Douglas deserves the support of those of us who care about good government,' declared Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of Franklin Roosevelt, in a message to Douglas headquarters today. In her radio speech Sunday night Mrs. Douglas said, 'If every attempt to clean out slums, and promote programs to permit families to own their own homes and their own farms, if every program to stimulate free enterprise and create new jobs, if every attempt to build up sound securities for the old and those in adversity, if every attempt to develop and conserve natural resources is to be throttled by being called socialistic and communistic, we will create the frustrations that lead to hopelessness and forsake democracy.'

"Downey hurled a challenge at Helen Douglas. Senator Sheridan Downey challenged Representative Douglas to a debate on the Central Valley Authority."

Ingersoll: Now how do you feel about that? Frank Rogers says that he feels it was just an awful shame that Helen Douglas allowed herself to push so hard, on such a--as he sees it--narrow, small issue. What would your feeling be about that?

Goodman: I don't know all of the reasons that she determined to get rid of Sheridan Downey. He was a conservative posing as a Democrat. And I wouldn't want to second guess her. I think that all these issues that are in here [pointing to Helen Gahagan Douglas vs. Richard Nixon, Aug. 20, 1950] are all beside the point.

Ingersoll: In the Blue Book, you mean?

Goodman: That [the "family farm"], in her mind, was the issue. I called her about the possibility of getting out a book in the aftermath of Watergate. And my concept was to get ten people who were involved in that election fight as I was, nine others and myself, to each do an evaluation of what the Nixon forces did in that campaign, in detail. You see, that's what was missing in all the Watergate discussions: people referred to how Nixon treated Helen but nobody presented any of the details and I wanted ten people to sit down and put together their memories of what the Nixon forces did to Helen. Evie [Chavoor] helped me and I went out and spent time in California and I located those who were still alive.

Ingersoll: Did you? You got the ten people.

Goodman: But they were old and worn, tired and really not interested, and though I had found a great resource of her original materials in Oklahoma, I couldn't get any interest in those who might be involved in doing the book now. This was some years ago. About two or three years ago? At the height of the aftermath of Watergate. In my opinion Helen herself didn't know how dirty Nixon was.

You see, the key thing about the Nixon operation (and his chief aide, Murray Chotiner, in my opinion takes much of the discredit) was the use of dirty tricks. Now the Nixon forces were pulling these dirty tricks on Helen all through the campaign and I don't think she ever really fully recognized it. Being the kind of warm person she is, she just assumed that this was something that some local little group had done. For example, let me see if I can find...[pauses while talking and looks for something among papers] You know, every time she spoke during this period and even subsequently, the Nixon people did things, dirty tricks, to try to ridicule her.

Ingersoll: Can you remember any of those particular incidents?

Goodman: They happened, all the way from California to Boston, Massachusetts. I'm going to read you one as an illustration. But there were many such things. "Balcony Barrage Splatters Actress After Speech Blasting Nixon. Former U.S. Representative Helen Gahagan Douglas was splattered with eggs at the Ford Hall Forum in Boston last night during a question-and-answer period after her address attacking Vice-President Nixon. The barrage came shortly before 10 p.m., just as the former member was preparing to answer some questions on the United Nations."\*

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\*This article must have come from a later period when Richard Nixon was vice-president. We could not find the date at the time of editing. [Ed.]

- Goodman: Do you know that all over California he had bales of hay thrown at her?
- Ingersoll: No. I hadn't heard that. As she was speaking?
- Goodman: Yes. Murray Chotiner, who was in my opinion the author of many of these things, conceived of every kind of dirty trick to ridicule her; but of course all of these have to be attributed to Nixon because this was Nixon's campaign again. Have you seen the quotes from Chotiner on the use of the Pink Paper? I have copies of some of the original quotes taken out of...(long pause while searching)
- Ingersoll: Would you like to comment just a little bit on these quotes from Murray Chotiner that you found interesting and would have used for your book?
- Goodman: Let me go back a little way first.
- Ingersoll: Fine.
- Goodman: I was interested in the use of the communism issue by the Nixon forces who knew at the time that all of these charges by Nixon were a red herring. When he began using them against Helen, he used the identical techniques that the Republican party had used against another person whom I had supported at that time, a Republican, Margaret Chase Smith.

Margaret came to me one day with a copy of the material put out by the Republican Central Committee of the state of Maine showing a tabulation of her vote on a selected group of issues and the tabulation of the vote of Vito Marcantonio who was considered the Communist member of the House of Representatives.

You know, in a congressional session a member votes somewhere between seven and eight hundred times, and if you take out a selected grouping you can find any member voting identically with another member on a selected group of issues. And so Margaret Smith showed me the materials published by the Republican Central Committee of the state of Maine against her showing that she had voted identically with Vito Marcantonio on something like a dozen issues. It was a ridiculous presentation and yet it's the kind of thing that uninformed people fall for. And this dirty tactic had been used by the inner core of the Republican party for three or four years when it suddenly showed up in the Helen Douglas campaign. And then in the Helen Douglas campaign, the Nixon forces dug out over the whole period of her time in office three hundred and fifty-four times when she and

Goodman: Vito Marcantonio voted on the same side. What a ridiculous presentation! You know, it could have been on a motion to adjourn and had absolutely no meaning! But the choice of the Pink Paper was to use this tactic, as it had been used previously, against Helen in the dirty kind of a campaign that of course Nixon has since been proved to have been addicted to throughout his whole political life. Isn't that awful?

Ingersoll: What was your part in that 1950 campaign?

Goodman: Well, I went to Walter Reuther on the basis of the experience I had had with this dirty tactic that the Republicans were using of equating anybody in the Congress with a Communist, or linking Vito Marcantonio with the Communists and indicating that anybody who voted on the same side as he did on any issue was suspect of being a Communist. What a ridiculous thing that you would vote against another person no matter what the issue solely because the other person is voting a given way!

So I went to Walter Reuther to ask to be assigned to her campaign, and I moved out to California and I worked on her election.

Ingersoll: What did you do there for her election?

Goodman: Well we organized a trade union group. The most active group at the time out there was the Retail Clerks that had the largest membership in her district. It was headed by a man named Joe De Silva who understood the issues, and we organized an appeal to the tenants on rent control, on the housing issue, and on the minimum wage issue. We did radio speeches, speeches at the local union meetings, put out literature on her behalf, and tried to counter this incredible, stupid dirty campaign that Chotiner, Murray Chotiner, had organized for Nixon. But the tragedy was that all of this followed shortly after a series in which Nixon had been active in the House of Representatives on the communist issue. Remember we had just had the hearings done by Congressman Mundt, who later became Senator Mundt, on protecting the United States from un-American and subversive activities and the hearings before the House Un-American Activities Committee on legislation to outlaw un-American and subversive activities. That spring there were the hearings regarding the alleged shipment of atomic materials to the Soviet Union during World War II.

All of these created a mood and an atmosphere that made it possible for both Manchester Boddy and Dick Nixon, but particularly Murray Chotiner in behalf of Nixon, to allege that Helen was soft on communism, their definition of communism being the

- Goodman: whole New Deal and everything that the Roosevelts had stood for. But the public is fickle and difficult to understand. It took time, it took twenty years, no thirty years after that and Water-gate for the American people to understand the true character of Dick Nixon.
- Ingersoll: How did labor leaders whom you came in contact with at that time feel about this communist allegation against Helen Gahagan Douglas?
- Goodman: The great tragedy was that a large number of them were Catholics and the Catholic church picked up this issue from the Nixon campaign. The CIO director for the state of California with whom I worked closely, Tim Flynn of the United Steel Workers, who was dedicated and devoted to Helen, flew up with me from Los Angeles to San Francisco where Helen had a post-mortem session on the election, the morning after Nixon won. Here was a husky 6'4" man who had come through all the conflicts of the struggle to form the CIO and the trade unions, and as we walked out the door he burst out crying to me, "My God, this whole thing, this whole defeat," he said, "was because the church ordered the people to talk about not wanting a communist in the Congress!"
- There had been a group of Catholics who had formed an organization called The Catholic Committee for Helen Douglas and here's a pamphlet which they had prepared in Helen's behalf.\* But since many of our trade union members were Catholics, I'm not sure how well we did among our own members, because the church was aggressively against her and the church did everything possible to bring about her defeat.
- Ingersoll: The church must have believed the Nixon allegations on communism then?
- Goodman: No, not necessarily that she was soft on communism, Nixon's charge, but they must have made a choice to prefer him over her. The Catholics in the CIO were very bitter at what the church did. I remember, as I told you, the conversation with Timothy Flynn, who was the state director of the CIO, who bemoaned the fact that the Catholics within the CIO had not faced up to the church and had a confrontation with them on this issue.
- Ingersoll: Was there ever any talk before the election of the possibility of their facing up on that issue?

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\* A Message from Catholics to Catholics. Xerox at The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.



- Goodman: Well, they thought because they were Catholics--and this pamphlet is the perfect illustration--that the Catholic endorsement by trade union leaders, such as CIO leader Irwin DeShetler, would offset the rumblings that had been created inside the church. But of course they couldn't have foreseen and couldn't offset the appeal made by the priests the Sunday before the Tuesday elections. It was as close to a direct request to all Catholics not to vote for Helen as one could possibly have formulated. So that the church, in effect, picked up Nixon's campaign and fell for it and helped bring about her defeat.
- Ingersoll: Was there any other group like that, like the church, that you feel was particularly influential on labor people?
- Goodman: On labor people? I don't recall any at the moment.
- Ingersoll: Was there in any way an open rift between Catholic and non-Catholic labor people over that?
- Goodman: No, the Catholic leadership people in the labor movement were all for Helen Douglas.\* They understood the domestic issues.
- Ingersoll: I see. It was the rank and file.
- Goodman: It was the rank and file who would have been affected by their priests at Mass Sunday mornings. We didn't get the vote that we normally had been getting up to that time in the areas where the trade unionists lived, and we were not able to pull it off for her in the face of the dirty campaign that Nixon had cooked up and that was picked up by the church as a basis for making a decision.
- Ingersoll: Did Nixon, as you remember, do anything special to woo the Catholics, or do you think they just liked the sort of...
- Goodman: Oh, I'm sure he did. I'm absolutely positive he did, but the record wasn't developed. People didn't understand, not many people understood, the tactics of the Nixon operation back then. You know, it took the Watergate investigations to really go into it in depth and show how despicable it really was. Back then, when you alleged these things people would look at you. And, of course, there was the obfuscation here. The Pink Sheet was, of course, the symbol and how could you attack a Pink Sheet,

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\* "All Labor Backing Helen Douglas for U.S. Senatorship," East Bay Labor Journal, Oakland, California, 28 April 1950. Xerox on file, The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

Goodman: particularly when Murray Chotiner said, "In consulting with the printer we wanted a different color and in stock we found a sheet with pinkish tinge." What dishonesty! And what obfuscation! Well, I don't know how much time...

Helen Gahagan Douglas's Rejection of Directorship of Housing Agency

Ingersoll: I'd like to go back to just one thing and that is in connection with legislation that you worked with Helen on, labor legislation. Did you have anything to do with advising her when she was voting on the Taft-Hartley bills in 1947 and 1949?

Goodman: No. Taft-Hartley wasn't my assigned area. I worked, as I told you, at that time mainly on social issues. That was what was great about the American labor movement at that time. We were concerned about the social welfare of the country. It's been totally perverted in recent times.

Ingersoll: Oh, that was so important to push in that direction!

Goodman: It's incredible that as important a force for social progress as the American labor movement has been, it is being totally perverted by Meany [George] and what he stands for today.

Ingersoll: And higher wages seem to be the only direction they seem to be going.

Goodman: Without any understanding as to the relationship between inflation and wage increases. Total lack of understanding. Meany is a plumber. As you know, plumbers are associated with sewers and I don't think a man associated with sewers all his life can get rid of the odor. I think he stinks.

I want to tell you what happened afterwards. This is not recorded anywhere. When Helen was defeated--was it the Clift Hotel?

Ingersoll: I can check on that.

Goodman: The morning after we had this post-mortem at the hotel. I came back to Walter Reuther who said how important it was to keep Helen active in political life. He and I went to President Harry Truman, and it so happened that there was a vacancy at that time at the head of what is now HUD, Housing and Urban Development, to which Carter [President Jimmy] just appointed a woman about twenty minutes ago.

- Goodman: Walter and I talked at length with Harry Truman about Helen and her background and her role in bringing about the enactment of the Housing Act in 1949. And he authorized us to offer her the position as administrator of the housing agency [Housing and Home Finance Agency]. Walter assigned me to do it. So my wife Elizabeth and I called Helen and located her at the family place up in Vermont. We went up and spent a long holiday weekend with her. I think it was the Fourth of July weekend.
- Ingersoll: What an appropriate position that would have been for her.
- Goodman: It all crystallized and I was, in effect, the agent of Harry Truman to offer the job as administrator.
- Ingersoll: She wouldn't take it?
- Goodman: She wouldn't take it.
- Ingersoll: What did she say?
- Goodman: I begged her. Day after day after day.
- Ingersoll: After the work you two had done on housing, what a perfect kind of thing that would have been for her.
- Goodman: How we needed someone like her.
- Ingersoll: How did she feel at that point?
- Goodman: Well, of course she was totally let down and she said that Melvyn and she had talked it over and decided that she should give up public life. It was very bad psychologically, the defeat. The dirty tricks that Nixon had pulled on her of course had cut deep and she was just determined not to get back into public life again. She said that Melvyn wanted her to concentrate on the family. Her daughter was there. Her son. And I just poured my soul out begging her to do it, but she wouldn't.
- Ingersoll: I guess she was the kind of woman that once she made up her mind about a direction, she was difficult to change.
- Goodman: Well, it had been a very wearing campaign.
- Ingersoll: Of course.
- Goodman: It had been, and now there's all the talk about putting women in the top jobs--of course, Carter's taking a terrific beating

- Goodman: right now. What people don't know is how hard it is to get nominees to accept. And yet, how much it would have meant had she accepted.
- Ingersoll: To both housing and to women in positions of authority and importance.
- Goodman: Right. I don't think I was ever more disappointed in anything I did in my whole career than in my inability to get her to accept that position.
- Ingersoll: What was it, three days, that you tried over that weekend?
- Goodman: Oh no, it was longer than that! We went up, we may have gone up on a Thursday night, maybe Friday morning. Came back the following week.
- Ingersoll: Have you ever spoken with her about it in the years since then?
- Goodman: Oh, I've met her on many occasions and talked about many things, mainly on, you know, the positive. There are many comments, I have a half a dozen of them back there somewhere, on her reticence to do an open, head-on attack on Nixon in the subsequent years. She would make a biting remark, but she would never do a thorough-going analysis. I'm not sure to this day she understands the full range of dirty tricks that Chotiner and Nixon pulled on her.
- Ingersoll: Do you think maybe she doesn't want to understand, that she'd just as soon not have that as part of her memory?
- Goodman: Maybe. I'm sure that the whole experience was a pretty bitter experience. The ridiculousness of the idea to suggest that she was a communist. It's been so overworked in this country. It's so overdone. It was the tactic of the inner core of the conservative Republican party for a whole decade, a whole decade. One of the costs to our society was that wonderful people like this were eliminated from government. I'm sure that thousands of others who might have gotten into politics shied away from it because of the experience that she went through.
- Ingersoll: And what the rest of us have suffered as a result! In talking about this in subsequent years, did you ever get any feeling that Helen Douglas might have wished that she had made a different decision about that housing post?
- Goodman: No. I've never talked directly to that issue in subsequent... You know, it was just a decision she made and I just had to accept it, and so did Reuther and so did Truman. Many, many times I thought of the desirability of going back over it.

Continued Interest in Atomic Development

- Ingersoll: Were there any later times in your life when your interests and Helen Douglas's overlapped?
- Goodman: One of the things that happened in my life was that the other phase of her work became my concentration. The scientists who had come up and looked for help in the CIO subsequently contacted Walter Reuther and said that they couldn't possibly continue under the miserable living conditions of the communities that the government built around the atomic plants. And so finally Walter Reuther assigned me to work with them and the more I got into their housing and communities, their problems--did you know that Oak Ridge was virtually a concentration camp?
- Ingersoll: I had heard that from someone who worked there.
- Goodman: Electrified barbed wire fence around it. A soldier with his gun out at that gate. And everything that happened inside had to be authorized at a desk in Washington. Every three months they were each taken into a room and given a lie detector test. Every kind of stupid activity...
- Ingersoll: The very sort of thing that Helen Gahagan Douglas had fought so hard against, that national security no matter how important it might be should never be the reason for sacrificing human rights.
- Goodman: Well, of course the problem was that at the end of the war, or shortly after the end of the war, when it became clear that the government wasn't going to improve conditions in these communities, the scientists' wives were making them resign. They wished they could go where they could have a decent home.
- Ingersoll: Surely. Was this something that was a concern of Helen Douglas's, the living conditions of the scientists, or was this something that grew out of the more general interests?
- Goodman: No. This was out of my own experience. I was assigned to work with these scientific groups. Hanford, Los Alamos, Oak Ridge. There were many more communities than the public knows. I estimate that one way or another we had thirty concentration camps as a result of the atomic program in the United States. Some of them I'm sure you've never heard of: Dana, Indiana I'm sure you've never heard of.

Ingersoll: In small communities that we just weren't aware of.

Goodman: So I was sent down to work and then I got back into what we in the Legislative Committee had worked on, the general legislation that Helen had put through, the Atomic Energy Act of 1946. This was the Douglas-McMahon Act. It was Senator McMahon from Connecticut and Helen introduced it in the House. In the private papers of Arthur Vandenberg, there's a chapter in which he tells he made the compromise positions on the passage of that legislation. I've got a lot of interesting documents--we may have to go through this at some other time--of the backing that Helen had for her work. But Vandenberg compromised by putting the military back into the structure. It was allegedly civilian control, but the military was in the structure. The civilian control was due to have been watched over by a guy named David Lilienthal, and he subsequently quit when Harry Truman yielded to the military control once the Korean War started and gave the military the control that had been debated and they had lost in the debate in Congress.

During all this period I was working with the community problems, the housing, the rent control. Of course, I had to get into the whole damned lie detector test business and the electrified barbed wire gates and all that. I moved over into the atomic field. And Helen kept up with the atomic field. She spoke about the bomb and its problems many times in later years.

Ingersoll: After she left Congress?

Goodman: All during this later period.

[end tape 1, side B]

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas's Strengths as Legislator

[begin tape 2, side A]

Ingersoll: Let me go back to something I had wanted to ask you before in lobbying and legislation and that sort of thing. Evie Chavoor told me that it was rather a common thing with Helen that when someone came in with a concern of their own and she recognized the importance of this concern, believed in it, she would not only support them but would often draw them in to do more work to make this concern be reflected in legislation. Is that part of your experience?

Goodman: Yes. What I had meant to develop earlier, the very first thing, was the great ability that she had to pick up an issue and learn how to formulate it, campaign for it, lobby for it, and bring up support. This was a great attribute she had, which I think was shared with Eleanor Roosevelt, of picking a social issue and carrying it to the public, to the Congress, so that it would have a chance for consideration. As a matter of fact, when she lost in the Congress, they didn't have too many like her. Wayne Morse, George Norris, Senator Wagner. There are people of that ilk, but there aren't many in the Congress who know how to pick up an issue and carry it to the public and to the forefront to get Congress engaged. In the last decade that we've lived through, they've all been looking to the White House for leadership instead of themselves being the leaders of the people in the Congress, the way she was. She had that kind of ability unlike Edith Nourse Rogers or Margaret Chase Smith who were much more passive generally, though Margaret Smith has the one great aggressive action --the counter-attack on Joe McCarthy to her credit. But Helen was the woman, in my opinion, in the early period in the Congress who had this ability. And what a great tragedy it was to lose her from the Congress.

Transcriber: Lee Steinback  
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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: REACTION OF UNION MEN

An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
in 1977

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TILFORD E. DUDLEY



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

As Leo Goodman and I left his house to xerox documents from the days of his CIO Legislative Committee work, Tilford Dudley and his wife were shoveling snow several doors down the street. Mr. Goodman strongly advised that I make an appointment to talk with Mr. Dudley, who had been assistant director of the CIO Political Action Committee, especially because of his presence when union leadership first learned of Helen Douglas's decision to run for the Senate.

By the time we set up our interview it was early spring, March 31, 1977, and he looked forward to a trip in the canoe given him by his son and currently leaning up against his house. When I called to say I would like to talk with him about Helen Douglas, I mentioned that I would also like to get his views on women in politics. He gave this subject considerable thought based on his own experience of working with congressmen and women and encouraging union men and women to be more politically active. Like his old friend Leo Goodman, Mr. Dudley gave me the feeling that the days of retirement are good, for they give one a chance to read and think perhaps more deeply and widely than before.

When I returned the edited transcript to him for his approval, he not only gave more details to clarify points, but also added several items which had come to mind since we met. .

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

26 May 1978  
Takoma Park, Maryland





### III HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: REACTION OF UNION MEN

[Interview 1: March 13, 1977]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

#### Birth of the CIO Political Action Committee

Ingersoll: Mr. Dudley, I understand that you were the assistant director of the Political Action Committee of the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] at the time Helen Douglas was in Congress. Could you tell me a little bit about that committee, and just what it tried to do, how it got started?

Dudley: Yes, in 1942 the results from the congressional elections, they being in the off year, that is a non-presidential year, showed that the Democrats, particularly the liberal Democrats of the New Deal were losing in strength. Sidney Hillman reported to Philip Murray and the council of the CIO that if the labor group did nothing and the trend were allowed to continue, it was pretty clear that a conservative president would be elected and a conservative administration in the elections of 1944. Phil Murray then asked Sidney Hillman to form a road committee and take a tour around the country and see how the members at the grass roots felt. Mr. Hillman and his group made the tour and came back reporting that there was a great desire among the CIO locals and regional offices to set up a committee. The CIO then did establish its CIO Political Action Committee which was known as CIO-PAC. Mr. Hillman became the chairman, and their offices were in New York. The CIO also had a Legislative Committee, as did the AF of L [American Federation of Labor]. And the Legislative Committee of the CIO, and of course the AF of L, continued to function from their respective national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

In 1944 I left my government job and went to work for the United Packinghouse Workers union which was affiliated with the CIO. Technically I was associate general counsel, but my real job was to be a political action director. And during 1944, late summer and early fall, I canvassed the country going to packinghouse regional offices and local plants trying to explain how a successful union must engage in politics as well as economic

Dudley: activity. I tried to say that there had to be a line at the ballot box as well as a picket line outside the plant that you were striking. And that a modern union was like a railroad, it had to have two tracks: one for economic activity, and one for political activity. And we pointed out that politically labor might lose through high prices, through taxation, through anti-labor legislation, while all the gains were being made over the bargaining table as the result of a strong strike, and therefore you had to have political strength as well as economic strength. That was the 1944 campaign, and that was the campaign in which Helen was first elected as congresswoman from her district in Southern California.

Helen Gahagan Douglas: Inspirer of Personal Loyalty and Ideological Sympathy

Ingersoll: Was it fairly soon after that that you met Helen, do you think?

Dudley: The elections were in November, and by January she was installed in Washington in her congressional office, and I, as the Packing-house Workers representative was beginning to spend more time with the new Congress, while not out in the field exhorting people to be active politically. I remember that in calling upon our congressmen from packing house districts, and others that would be friendly towards us, I called upon Helen's office, and after a short wait was shown in to see her. They explained to me that she was busy and resting, so I went in and found her reclining on a couch, while I sat in a chair not too far away. And we got acquainted and talked some about the organization of Congress.

Ingersoll: That wasn't the way you usually expected to find your congressman, was it?

Dudley: No. Usually you meet them at a desk and you meet with them very formally, and you don't find a lovely lady reclining on a couch. I think of one congressman I called on who came from Iowa. He was at his desk, and after he listened for a while he rose and motioned that I was to accompany him to the door. I walked with him to the door--he was rather hostile--and as he turned to walk back to his desk I turned to walk back to his desk with him. We talked some more, and again he arose and took me back to the door again. [Laughter] And I walked too. I think we went back and forth two or three times before I finally got my say in and decided it was time to leave.

Ingersoll: What kind of a person was Helen? Perhaps in contrast to that man, to meet at a time like that, your first meeting.

Dudley: Well, she was very much in contrast, and she was at least in fundamental agreement with the campaign and the general objectives we all had in the labor movement and the New Deal movement. Of course you like Helen intellectually, and in addition, she was and still is, a very charming lady, and you can't help but like her not only for her points of view. I think all men liked Helen as a lovely woman. And that's an attitude I think should be encouraged. Our views to her were those of loyalty politically. But we also developed a great deal of loyalty personally. We regarded her as a lady, as an angel, as someone whom we admired and loved in the general sense of that word. And this meant that she had a strong personal following, as well as a strong ideological following. I think, for example, of some of my friends in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, because I later left the United Packinghouse Workers and I went to work in New York, working both for the CIO Political Action Committee, of which Sidney Hillman was the chairman, and also for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of which he was the president. And they divided my time, and divided my salary, although as Mr. Hillman later said, he suspected I was giving far more time to the Political Action Committee than I was to the Clothing Workers. [Laughs] He smiled as he said it, and neither one of us was surprised. But anyhow, when Helen wanted something out of those men in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, she got it. [Laughs] Again, it was personal loyalty, as well as ideological sympathy.

Ingersoll: Were funds given to her from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers?

Dudley: Oh, sure. All kinds of funds. Now, you see the CIO at that time put on the drive for contributions to candidates. The law wasn't too clear; but we were sure that it would become clear, and it did become clear later in the Taft-Hartley law, that for political purposes we would need to use individual contributions from our members, as distinguished from union dues. Our feeling was that our members naturally would be divided some about whether we should be in politics at all, and whether we should support this candidate (usually a Democrat) as opposed to some other candidate (often the Republican), and so in view of the newness of our political action program, and the potential disagreements as to whom we should support and what we should do, we felt that the money ought to come only from those individuals who were willing to contribute it individually and voluntarily.

Now this meant that in the different unions, we would put on drives. We had leaflets, and we had speeches at the union meetings, and sometimes at the plant gates in which we would urge

Dudley: our members to contribute. "Give a Buck to PAC" was the slogan. And just as the Red Cross and the Community Chest put on a drive for contributions, so would we. Now this would vary some. In some places they would just put on a drive and pass the hat, or whatever was the easiest way. Generally the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, where they had much more experience in doing things, would go first to the people that they knew were sympathetic, and would give, and would give the most. And they'd ask if they would write their name down. So if Joe Blow would give \$8, and the next guy would give \$6, as they went around to the other people, they'd say, "Now, we want you to give, and here's what the other people at the plant are giving." [Laughs] And they'd show them the list, as a means of inducing a similar contribution. Some of the newer mass unions weren't quite so sophisticated in their approach. So the Amalgamated Clothing Workers had individual money like that that could be given legally, either directly or through the CIO Political Action Committee, to Helen for political campaigning.

Then, of course, there were educational conferences, and there were meetings and conventions to be addressed, and sometimes expenses to be picked up. But technically these were not political expenditures, and trade union money could be used. You will be interested to know in passing that in the first year the CIO insisted upon giving a receipt to each person who contributed. This meant thousands of them, maybe hundreds of thousands of individual receipts. They were of course investigated by the FBI, as we expected them to be. And the FBI people sent their representatives to the New York office and they started going through these thousands of receipts to be sure that we really had individual contributions and had given a receipt for the money. You didn't have to give a receipt, but we wanted to prove that Joe Blow gave \$3, or \$1, or 50¢, or whatever it was.

Ingersoll: A very important way of keeping things straight and above board, wasn't it?

Dudley: Incidentally, in that campaign of '44, some of the conservatives felt that they would ruin the CIO drive by exposing us. And I remember that either Time or Newsweek ran double spread, two pages, reproducing some of the CIO leaflets that we had, which would be on issues and candidates they should vote for. And their general theme was that the CIO Political Action Committee was going to be terribly powerful politically, and therefore terribly dangerous. Therefore, you should vote down, you see, this grasp for power by these union workers. But in doing that, they told an awful lot of people about us, about what we were doing and about our goals.

Ingersoll: They were really publicizing it.

Dudley: They did us a great favor. [Laughs]

Helen Gahagan Douglas: Speaker with Contagious Dedication

Ingersoll: You spoke of speakers, educational speakers whom the unions would have. Was Helen ever one of these speakers?

Dudley: I'm sure she was. I don't remember any specifically. Oh, I remember meeting her at some meeting she addressed out in Tennessee. She addressed the meeting--I came to it from some place else, and she came to it from the west, I think. We rode together on the plane from Knoxville (if it was Knoxville) back to Washington. Oh, yes, she was a popular and frequent speaker. She had humor and eloquence and could lift an audience emotionally.

Ingersoll: Can you remember that particular addressing of the people in Tennessee? Can you say anything about Helen as a speaker to unions?

Dudley: I've tried to remember it. Of course, I remember coming back with her, because anybody would remember being with Helen. But what she actually said at the meeting, I just can't remember. Some kind of a state convention or educational conference. But you see, her charm, her enthusiasm--she has a contagious enthusiasm--and she indicates how it's important to do this: how these dangerous elements are developing power, and it's important for the union people to know about them, and act to stop them and so forth, and support good candidates. There's such contagion in her dedication, in her conviction, that the audience just swallowed right up what she said. She didn't talk to them about strictly union issues like negotiations with employers. She talked about social issues for the community, in which we were, or should be, interested.

Ingersoll: Have you ever been in the situation where she rejected the advice of a man or put forth a point of view that was different from what a man might hold? Do you have any feeling about whether she was able to do this without angering him, or not?

Dudley: I don't remember any time when she did. Yes, I think most liberals, but I think particularly the men I knew, would be inclined to melt before Helen's enthusiasm. I can't remember anybody standing up and saying, "Helen, you're wrong." And if a union guy spoke strongly, he'd say, "You're God damn wrong." You

- Dudley: didn't do that with Helen. I'm sure there were times, on smaller matters, when there must have been some disagreement on strategy, on issues, and there would certainly be a desire by our people to listen and consider carefully what she said, on the assumption that she might well be right. We didn't really have disagreements because we were in the same camp of liberal doctrines. In those days the liberals were pretty distinct as being different from the conservatives. Nowadays the lines are somewhat fuzzier.
- Ingersoll: Did she ever ask your advice on labor legislation, or any of the other things concerning labor?
- Dudley: I can't remember. I assume she did, but probably somewhat in a passing way. I don't think we ever sat down in a real thought session. I can't think of any such session like that. I think she asked advice in terms of what this or that union official might think about something. And, of course, something about what were the unions doing, or where were they meeting, and people coming and going out of Washington. Those would be details of logistics. But I don't remember any real discussion with her on issues. On her own strategy. I didn't know too much about her district. As I remember, there was a heavy colored population in that district.
- Ingersoll: Yes, at least part. Not all of the district, but a part of it was. There was a silk-stocking part, there was also the colored part.
- Dudley: I think at the time there was a question, how could a person get these different kinds of support. The silk-stocking part, unless they're silk-stocking enough to be liberal, which is sometimes true, but not usually, would be likely to be conservative. The silk-stocking, and the blacks, would have different points of view, and we had to have somebody who could appeal to both. And it seems to me there was a third segment--I can't remember whether there were many union people in Helen's district or not. It seems to me not particularly, but I don't really recall the district.
- Ingersoll: Yes, there were.
- Dudley: It was her charm that pulled them all in together.

1950 Campaign: The Odds Against Helen Gahagan Douglas

Ingersoll: Let's talk about that 1950 campaign, and the incident that you recall of talking with her.

Dudley: As I recall, it happened that spring of 1950. Jack Kroll was then director of the CIO Political Action Committee, Sidney Hillman having died in the summer of 1947; and we had moved our offices to Washington. Jack asked me if I wanted to go with him on an appointment to see Helen Douglas. Of course, I was more than willing to go. As we went in, Helen greeted us both with her usual enthusiasm--she is so contagious in her personality. And she said, "Jack, I have something to tell you, and I hope you'll like it." Well, Jack was all ready to like it, although we didn't know what it was. And she said, "I've decided to run for the Senate. And what do you think?" Well, Jack immediately felt that it was a fine idea.

She would be running against Sheridan Downey, who was then incumbent Democratic senator, and who wasn't any great liberal (certainly not a radical), but he wasn't a conservative either. He wasn't a bad guy, a vicious guy--kind of the middle-of-the-road. And she would be running against him in the Democratic primary, and then would have to run against a Republican in the general election. There wasn't any debate between her and Jack. Jack Kroll immediately agreed with her, but I must confess to you that I think most men, and the men I knew in the labor movement, were inclined to agree with Helen almost automatically. But I privately had my doubts; in fact, I was really quite concerned, quite worried at the time. I didn't want to dispute the judgement of my boss who had rushed in to agree promptly, and of course one would always hesitate to dampen Helen's contagious enthusiasm, but I tried to raise a few questions to throw some doubts on the conversation. Did she think she could beat Sheridan Downey, for example. Well, she thought she could. She thought it important to fight with him on this question of irrigation for large or small farms. And I asked if the people who supported Downey would support her in the general election, if she won. She said, "No, not all of them. Some would and some wouldn't," and you couldn't tell. She'd simply do the best she could. I may have brought up the question about raising enough money for both the primary and the general election; I think Mr. Kroll as well, and she assured me that they felt she could.

And Jack said the labor movement would be all back of her in the primary, as well as in the general election. So, I was in the position of being someone who was the unhappy subordinate. I didn't agree with what was going on, but it didn't seem very

Dudley: diplomatic to fly in the face of the judgment which both announced so positively then and there. I had hoped that I might get back and talk with Helen privately about it, and try to suggest my doubts and the fact that my judgment was to the contrary, but I never got back to her. I did discuss it later somewhat with Mr. Kroll. Sometimes one can speak privately a little more easily than in front of somebody that you adored. Jack would never have changed his mind in front of Helen. But even when we were alone he said, "Oh, no, Ted, that's the thing to do. I'm all for it." I couldn't shake him into having second thoughts, and this meant that our position was stated, and as far as she was concerned, she had a green light to go into the primary elections, which she did. It was too bad because what happened basically was, as I and almost anybody else could foresee, that you do spend a lot of your money in the primary, and you do spend a lot of your friendships. And some of the people who oppose you strongly get so opposed to you that they won't come back. Democrats often had this problem. After a hot primary, how do you then pull yourself together for the general election? This isn't the only place that we failed to pull ourselves together fast enough. It's tragic there because Helen was influential, and well liked, and she continued to be influential, as a member of the House. She was on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and all that was knocked out. And, of course, it was also unfortunate in that it gave the second step to Richard Nixon on his road to infamy.

Ingersoll: Do you have any feeling about something that Leo Goodman mentioned. He said that quite soon after the election--perhaps it was a breakfast after the election, he and a man called Timothy Flynn were together (a great big union man, as Leo described him) and Timothy Flynn felt just terrible about what had happened. Was almost in tears. And Timothy Flynn's view of it was that a good many of the people in labor, who ordinarily would have supported Helen, were Catholic. And the Catholic church was caught up in the whole anti-communism speech of Nixon. Flynn felt that priests made such a strong point against Helen in church the very Sunday before the election, that this had captivated a good part of the labor vote. Do you have any feeling about that?

Dudley: I wasn't out there, so I don't know, but I'm sure that that happened, because as you know, Tricky Dick made this his campaign issue and technique, as he did with Jerry Voorhis before. I remember that he used to say that Helen had a pro-communist voting record, and he would hold up in his speeches Helen's voting record, or part of Helen's voting record, which was mimeographed on pink paper. And he would say, "Here's her pink voting record. Just look at it." And to prove that it was pink in his judgment, he would cite her votes that were along with Marcantonio [Rep. Vito] of New York who was an avowed Communist. Of course, what he did



Dudley: was, as Helen pointed out, he compared her votes with Marcantonio's on domestic issues, and on domestic issues the commie line was just the New Deal line. He did not compare Helen's vote with Marcantonio's on the international issues, which is where the split would have appeared. He established that that was the issue.

I think it was to counter that, and it was the Catholic issue in mind, that she got Jiggs Donohue [F. Joseph] who was a lawyer and a commissioner here for the District of Columbia, to go out to California and campaign with her. Jiggs was a good Democrat, a good Truman Democrat. Truman had appointed him to be a commissioner for Washington, D.C. At that time, the District of Columbia was governed by three commissioners, appointed by the president. By statute, one was detailed from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; two were civilians. Jiggs was thus one-third of the District government and by far the most influential. He was very loyal to Truman and he was a good Catholic. So he was out there for at least several weeks, speaking I suppose essentially to Catholics to try and get them to vote for her. In those days, Catholics were more inclined to fall for that approach than other people. I also heard that as a result of that campaign, Helen had to mortgage her house for a large sum.

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas's Sense of Obligation

Ingersoll: Did she have to assume that financial responsibility?

Dudley: Someone asked--in fact I think I asked her how it happened; to mortgage your own house is an awful big gamble. I think what had happened is that towards the end of the campaign, some people who were on her side, who were part of her campaign establishment, had spent some good sums of money, particularly for last minute advertising--full page ads.

Ingersoll: Trying so hard to--

Dudley: Trying so hard, thinking that--"gee, one more and this will make it." And they overspent, and so as a result the campaign committee owed a sum of money that was substantial, and Helen felt obligated in some way to meet that. My understanding was that she mortgaged the house to pay for it. I'm not at all sure that she was legally obligated to do that. It was a committee debt, and not hers. But as I remember, that was one of the burdens that she carried down on that defeat.

Ingersoll: That's very interesting that she would have felt responsible.

- Dudley: It was her campaign. It seems to me I said, "But Helen, you couldn't pass on every advertising decision, every expenditure; the responsibility just couldn't be yours." But I think she said, "Well, they did, and they were for me, and they were officials of my committee. And I had to make good." It's too bad.
- Ingersoll: That certainly gives us some insights that we haven't had before. I'm really so glad we have them. [Tape turned off]
- Dudley: I think Evie Chavoor said this to me once. I think I commented, "Helen is usually a bit late getting into the reception, or the cocktail party, or the meeting which she is to address. We're pretty well along before she comes in." And Evie said, "Yes, she does this intentionally." "Why?" said I. "To get a reputation of the late Mrs. Douglas, or something?" "No," said Evie, as I remember. "You wait till the crowd is assembled, then you're able to make a kind of a grand entrance, you see, from the rear door, and everybody is there and when you come in, they all stand up and they applaud, and there's a much more effervescent spirit." And I said I didn't think Helen was vain like that; it was looking for a show, and Evie said, "She feels that she ought to do it, that she owes it to her supporters. That she owes it to her friends and her supporters to make as effective an entrance as possible because that is part of the overall campaign of drumming up support and enthusiasm for you. She doesn't do it for herself. She does it for the larger assembly of public support and campaign workers and so forth."
- Ingersoll: Oh, that is interesting, isn't it.
- Dudley: What I thought at first was a bad habit--like Hubert Humphrey's [laughs] who's too late to receive public applause--was well thought out, and really very unselfish.
- Ingersoll: And she was able to do it, probably, with all of the presence of the actress, which she had so successfully been.
- Dudley: Oh, yes. She was the actress on stage, and she'd wait for her cue. That's very true.

Another word that would come up frequently (I've heard Helen use this word many times) this is the word "homework." She was proud of doing her homework on issues. And I've heard her talk about engaging in a discussion, or maybe a debate, and sometimes saying about the other person, "Well, he hadn't done his homework. He didn't have the facts, and I had done my homework and I knew the facts, so I could talk more effectively." And often when she was going to a conference or going to a vote on the floor, she would say, "Well, I've done my homework." And this word, and

- Dudley: this habit, this obligation on her part, was pretty constantly on her mind. She was proud of doing her homework, and noticed when other people did not do their homework.
- Ingersoll: Do you think it ever bothered any of the labor men that Helen was as sure of herself as she was?
- Dudley: I never noticed this. I don't think Helen was sure of herself in the sense of being cocky, and opinionated. I never got the feeling about Helen that she knew it all, or thought she did. She had her opinions, her convictions, but they were more enthusiasm, and she would pull you up with her enthusiasm, rather than saying, "You don't know anything, and I do, and you do what I say." I've never heard anybody say that about her. Some people who are opinionated can throw off their support, and some cannot.
- Ingersoll: Yes, and perhaps women can't get away with an opinionated approach as much as men can. What do you think?
- Dudley: I don't know. [Laughs] I'm a great admirer of women, and I'm not sure that's true. It might be the opposite. [Laughs] Sometimes if a woman's opinionated, as a matter of courtesy, you've got to let it slide, whereas with another man, you'd strike back at it.

This might interest you. When Helen lost her race in California, Jack Kroll, director of CIO-PAC invited her to become director of women's activities, with any appropriate title, to organize women politically. Verda Barnes, now in Senator Church's office, had been our pioneer in this field, effectively and on a large scale, but had moved on to Senator Glen Taylor. If Helen had accepted, she would have had a carte blanche and would have lifted CIO-PAC to a high level of prestige and glamour. Jack was delighted over his own idea. However, Helen declined but said she would get someone for us. And she did. She came up with Esther Murray, who had been part of her California office.

Although Jack, and I too, interviewed Esther for the job, there wasn't any doubt from the beginning but that we would take her. After all, look who she was. She did come with us and worked effectively with CIO-PAC for many years.

Helen Gahagan Douglas's Recognition of Eisenhower's Charisma

Dudley: Let me tell you something that happened before the 1950 debacle. This is in 1948; it was commonly said in all the liberal Democratic circles that Harry Truman didn't have a chance. He was sure to be defeated, and why in God's name didn't the Democrats get some other nominee? Truman was the candidate who was sure to lead us into disaster. And some of us, and I'm thinking of myself in particular, thought: well, if that's really true that we'll lose with Truman, we ought to, in terms of obligations to our overall causes, start looking around for somebody else. Well, I guess it was maybe that previous year that Philip Murray had had General Eisenhower in to address our CIO convention. Eisenhower was known as a good fellow, maybe interested in politics, but not in it.

So, some of us, and I'm afraid maybe I was perhaps the leader, began to organize a kind of draft Eisenhower movement for the Democratic convention in Philadelphia in 1948. We put out in the CIO a pamphlet on Eisenhower--a picture of him wearing a civilian hat, and his positions on some issues which were generally rather vague, I must confess, but they bordered on the liberal side. We did a mailing we tried to camouflage, and I urged our CIO people going to Democratic conventions over the country to try to get delegates elected who would be for Eisenhower. When this general discussion of "should we get Ike in place of Harry Truman," came up, I found that Helen was in agreement. Also Jimmy Roosevelt. And I think quite a few of the people from California. And we had other people, of course, all over the country--

[end of tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

Eisenhower was then president of Columbia University. The time came, before the Democratic Convention, when I thought it important to check with him personally about his positions on issues and his availability. So I telephoned and asked for an appointment. There was some hesitancy on the other end of the line, but I explained that I was assistant director of the CIO Political Action Committee and a supporter of Eisenhower for president. Eventually I was invited to come up. We talked frankly about the issues and his availability. It was a very interesting session, but that isn't your subject. So there's no point in going into it.

Anyhow, Helen also went up to see Ike somewhere along in that spring. I think before I did. And I remember that she came back saying something to the effect that she talked with him at Columbia, and that, I think she said, "He certainly has charisma."

- Dudley: I said, "What do you mean?" And she said, "Well, you can just feel him--this very attractive, this very male man. You just can't help but be drawn to him, and like him." And she said, "He's just indisputably agreeable, and he draws people to him, and he'd make a great candidate." And we went for him. I was interested that Helen, to whom we were all drawn, sensed a similar personal magnetism on the part of Eisenhower which some of us didn't. And she would be a judge of that if anybody would.
- Ingersoll: That personal magnetism is probably very important in politics.
- Dudley: There's no question about it.
- Ingersoll: Something that you can't really quantify, or a person could never develop, but a person has.
- Dudley: It's part of personality. A liberal was supposed to say that people vote on the issues. "Explain the issues and they'll vote right." Well, that's partly true. But it's also true that people will vote for you as a person, even though they may not agree with you on the issues. They'll just tend to forget the issues, and I've had this happen to me. People in the District of Columbia who disagreed with me on civil rights would catch my smile and end up supporting me.

Part of that Eisenhower thing was interesting in that after some conferences with CIO people, and maybe Helen, I'm not sure, but certainly with Jake Arvey, chairman of the Cook County Democratic Committee and national committeeman, out in Chicago, we decided we'd better drop the Eisenhower thing. Jimmy Roosevelt, of the California delegation, got on a special train from California coming to Philadelphia. I tried to reach him as they crossed the country, to get word to Jimmy that we'd decided to drop the Eisenhower thing, but I could never get through because those special trains are unscheduled, you see. You don't know where they're going to be. I tried a couple of telegrams but apparently none got delivered, because when the delegation arrived at the railroad station in Philadelphia, Jimmy Roosevelt came off the train announcing that he and his fellow delegates from California were for Eisenhower for the nomination. [Laughs] We hadn't been able to get to him.

When the convention finally assembled, the nomination was wide open. Some people went around saying, "I don't know, is Truman the candidate? Probably can't make it. And Eisenhower won't make it. I think I'm for Douglas." And people said, "Oh, you're for Douglas. Whom do you mean? Senator Paul Douglas? Bill Douglas (who was on the Supreme Court)? Helen Douglas?" [Laughs] Everybody was for Helen for something, although we weren't pushing her seriously for president.

Ingersoll: And these people who said, "I'm for Douglas " might be for any of these.

Dudley: Any of them, yes. [Laughter] Any one of the three Douglasses would have made a good president.

Ingersoll: Those are marvellous stories. Can you think of any more?

Dudley: I remember one other item. The CIO had an Educational Conference in the major downtown hotel in Columbus [Ohio]. It learned that the restaurant or coffee shop would not serve Negroes. Protests were made ineffectively. So the whole conference moved into the coffee shop and held sessions there. Helen was a scheduled speaker and she addressed the group there. I was not present but it must have been a glowing, sparkling meeting with the emotions of the situation, plenty of excitement (no violence), and Helen adding her own effervescence.

I'm afraid I'm about run dry.

#### Women in Politics: Assets and Liabilities

Ingersoll: Let's talk just for a few minutes about women in politics, and your whole feeling about it. You've been out working in the field of labor and politics. What chances do you think women candidates have? What sort of assets, what sort of liabilities?

Dudley: I think they have a lot of assets, and their chances are obviously getting better as people get more used to it. But, I think that Helen Douglas illustrates one of the advantages that women have in politics, because men are inclined to be attracted by an attractive feminine person, as Helen Douglas was. Of course, there are other attractive women also, and you don't have to be a beautiful actress, actually, for a man to want to agree with you, and to support you. It may be partly the gentlemanly instinct that you support a lady, but I think it's really more than that, it's just that there's something--I grew up in a coeducational school, and in my work here, generally speaking, I would do a little more for a woman, an attractive woman, than I would for a man. Maybe not a great deal more, but there's an additional edge. I'm a little more inclined to overlook a mistake, or something that isn't too tactful, or not too wise. And there's a desire to throw your heart into it. Helen was one of the first, of course, who had that great appeal. Of course,

Dudley: Mrs. Paul Douglas was also in the House of Representatives. She wasn't the actress that Helen Douglas was, but she too was attractive, and had a strong following, and we were all unhappy when she decided not to run again.

Another factor I've discovered, in addition to this--if an attractive woman makes a speech, and a man makes a speech, you're more inclined to agree with the woman, or do what she wants. There was, of course, the feeling for a while that, well the woman's nice and you'd like to help her, but she really doesn't know enough to be a congressman, or government official. That feeling, I think, is pretty well gone. Not entirely, but--Ella Grasso in Connecticut, for example, is certainly overcoming such feeling as that, because she's competent and everybody knows it. Bella Abzug wins, or did win the congressional races in New York--not so much on feminine charm, but she does so on a sort of bulldozing aggressiveness. And we like this aggressiveness in her, too, although it's a different kind of appeal. I've also found two other things about women in politics.

Ingersoll: What's that?

Dudley: I was an alternate member of the Democratic National Committee for twenty years. This means that I went to the meetings, usually with some liberal causes to push--particularly about civil rights, and maybe labor issues, or whatever they were. In general the New Deal point of view. I generally found I got more help from the national committee women than I did from the national committee men. And if we had a little caucus to discuss issues, and who would vote on a move and do this and that, I would get more women coming to it, and more women to be cooperative than I would the men. Now, I can assure you, it wasn't because of my charm. I think when I look back on it that perhaps the men were more tied to political ideology. The women were less tied and were more flexible in their thinking. They hadn't really committed themselves to be segregationists, they were still thinking about it, they were more flexible.

Ingersoll: It didn't have to be part of their personality, perhaps, to be a strong this or a strong that.

Dudley: They hadn't grown up fighting issues, making strong opinions. Also, I think, and I'm rationalizing, but I think that the men maybe were more apt to have ties with business groups, or political groups that were important in vote getting, and money-raising aspects of a financial campaign. They were more inclined to be the wheeler-dealers, you see. So they'd be tied to this and that group back in the smoke-filled room, as we'd say. And the women were less inclined to have those ties and those commitments. So

Dudley: that I found the women on the national committee were more cooperative and more helpful, and freer, than the men were. In addition, there was a little extra zing to working with the women than you get from the men. [Laughs]

Another thing we have discovered, certainly in the Democratic party in the District of Columbia, and it must be true elsewhere, is that when it comes to getting a lot of work done, detailed work, we were more able to find women to do it than to find men. Now this might be that men are busy in their jobs and careers and what not, and women are housewives, etc., and a little freer in their time. But if it came to volunteers for doing things, we would find the women more available. In fact, when people in the District talked about giving the women their fair share of power, we'd say, "Hell, the women are the Democratic Committee." They essentially not only help make the decisions, but we wouldn't dare make a decision without their approval, because they are the committee. They do the work.

So women are important not just because of their flexibility, and their attractiveness and charm, but also because they have the time and they're willing to give it for a good cause. Women are inclined to be a little more public-spirited than men, I think. They're trying to support a good cause for the sake of the community, while I think a man is inclined a little more to making money. This is probably an easy and therefore inaccurate generalization. I've found them more available in support of different causes.

Ingersoll: That's very interesting. How would you rate them on some of these things that have come out in studies that have been done comparatively between men and women? Would your feeling be that they are more outgoing than men are?

Dudley: Yes, I think they're more outgoing than men are. And I think they're a little more willing to wear their hearts and their minds on their sleeves, so to speak. I think it is a little easier to get their reaction, their opinion. They don't have to think it over as much as the men who have other things to think about--they think they do. I think women are inclined to be more outgoing than men. There are individual exceptions, of course.

Ingersoll: As potential candidates, or as workers, in politics, do you think there is any truth in the possibility that they're more imaginative, adventuresome, with less care about practical matters? Does that make any sense to you?

Dudley: What I said a moment ago about their having fewer ties and convictions with certain ideologies or certain kinds of pressure



Dudley: groups back in their communities has a bearing here. This gives them the freedom to be more adventuresome. Yes, I think they're more open to new thoughts. At least, that's been my experience.

Ingersoll: Again, somebody has said they're more liberal, freethinking, experimenting, and that would tie in, wouldn't it, with your feeling of their being able to be more flexible?

Dudley: I think that's correct. Of course, we have a lot of liberal, freethinking men. Go back to George Norris, for example, McGovern (George), and great FDR himself. We've had a lot of men who've been very liberal, and the whole New Deal was imaginative and creative and unorthodox. So, I don't give all that to women, but just between the two sexes, I think they're a little bit more inclined to be liberal.

Ingersoll: What about the business of self-assurance? There's one writer on this sort of comparison who feels that women are apt to be less self-assured, less confident.

Dudley: I think that's true, and I think that has been true quite a bit. They know that it's unusual for a woman to make a speech, to take a position, and so they're not certain about it, and they think people may be critical. I was over at our local bank just at noon today, before you came, and commented that not only the person who was helping us to guarantee some signatures on stock certificates was a woman, but the manager of the local bank was a woman. As a matter of fact, all the people running that branch were women except one. And I said, it's very interesting, and I approve of this becoming a kind of a woman's bank in terms of management. The woman manager said, "Well, we haven't had many complaints." But you see, she was a little uncertain. In other words, she was thinking about complaints they might get by reason of their being there. I didn't think they were having complaints at all. This would tie in with your question about being a little less confident, a little feeling that they're subject to attack and criticism. It's natural. After all, the evolution of women from a house role to a public role is still going on. People have to get used to it, including women themselves.

Ingersoll: A woman I spoke to yesterday whom you may know, Rachel Bell, who was in and out of Helen's office a good deal in the foreign policy area, said that she felt Helen and Clare Boothe Luce were quite different as congresswomen from any of the other congresswomen who had been in there before them in that they had both been successful in their own right before they went to Congress, whereas at that time, many of the women who went to Congress got in because their husbands had died in office or no longer could fill the post, and they stepped in. Did you have very much experience with other women running for office in those days?

Dudley: I didn't really. There was Edna Kelly in New York, there's Sullivan [Leonor] from St. Louis, but I didn't really know them. And there were others. Mrs. Paul Douglas, I think, might have been an exception to Rachel Bell's comment, because when she was in Congress she was a woman of recognized ability, and we all knew it.

Ingersoll: And she had gotten in on her own merits?

Dudley: I think so, as I remember it, yes. As I remember, she and Paul had been separate in their approaches to that. She and Paul Douglas. That's my memory.

In 1946 I actively supported a woman who ran for Congress in Atlanta. She was very competent and managed her campaign herself. She won but was later counted out through a biased use of voting machines in the rural counties.

One problem that may be still involved in women's taking on these big public positions is whether or not they have been sufficiently involved in the nitty-gritty of important, complicated businesses, and therefore political and economic issues, and can make a decision that comes out of a lot of experience and wide judgement. But, I can't see that femininity, I can't see that being a woman, is being involved in that one way or the other. It seems that that's merely the matter of getting experience. After all a woman may be a bad driver of a car not because she's a woman, but because she hasn't driven very much.

Ingersoll: But the combination of education and experience probably is important.

Dudley: I think as women get more and more into the public field they will have that.

Ingersoll: We've come to the end of the tape and the afternoon at about the same time. Thank you so much for your views on Helen Gahagan Douglas and her political career and for your sensitive insights into the more general subject of women in politics.

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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Kenneth Harding

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND THE DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
in 1977

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KENNETH R. HARDING



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

From 1946 to 1954 Kenneth Harding was assistant to the chairman of the Democratic National Congressional Committee, commonly called the Democratic Campaign Committee, and was an apprentice to his father, "Cap" Harding, who was executive director. The office of the committee was just next door to that of Helen Gahagan Douglas. Working for the committee, Kenneth Harding learned the political lore that only his father could teach, both while the two of them were in the office on the corridor known as "Red Gulch," and while they traveled around the country trying to get a feel for closely contested districts. When his father died, Kenneth Harding took over the job of executive director which he held from 1954 to 1972.

As Mr. Harding explained when I asked him about his present position as sergeant at arms of the House of Representatives, "One telephone call can completely change what we will be doing as the most important job of the day." Although the responsibilities of paymaster, keeper of the insurance records of members of the House, and banker could wait, responsibilities concerned with security in and around the Capitol could not, and so our conversation was more than once interrupted. Yet for the hour we met in his office on June 16, 1977, Mr. Harding turned his mind to Helen Gahagan Douglas and the era of the '40s and '50s as though that were his most important job.

Mr. Harding's secretary suggested that rather than sending him the transcript for clarification of points and approval, I might go over it with him. In spite of an extremely busy day for him, we worked intensively for about a half hour going over the points I felt needed clarifying.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

26 May 1978  
Takoma Park, Maryland



## IV HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND THE DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

[Interview 1: June 16, 1977]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Functions of the Democratic Campaign Committee

- Ingersoll: Would you give me an idea of what the functions were of that Democratic Campaign Committee in whose office you were with your father, as a young man, when Helen Gahagan Douglas was in office.
- Harding: That seems like rather a long time ago now. But the functions of that office were that of a service committee to the members of Congress. And that's why it was permitted to operate from the Hill. And, at that time it was also the financing office for the campaigns. But in those days campaign contributions of two or three hundred dollars were considered large contributions. Today, it's hard to buy a postage stamp. That campaign committee, I might say, was located right next door, physically, to Helen Gahagan Douglas.
- Ingersoll: I realized it was on the same corridor, but I didn't realize it was that close.
- Harding: Right next door. And we had the great pleasure of not only having them as political allies in that office, but as personal friends.
- Ingersoll: Splendid. That will give me some good ideas of day-to-day contacts, probably.
- Harding: Well, I have to charge the memory back a little bit to think back on those days which, I guess, were very, very exciting then, but I guess by comparison, things didn't happen quite as fast. You had more time for visiting between offices, which they don't have now.
- Ingersoll: You really feel a difference now?

Harding: There's just no question there is a great difference in just the day to day living on the Hill today compared to what there was just thirty years ago.

Ingersoll: Do you think that makes a difference in the way people, various colleagues in Congress feel about each other, and about what they're doing, and what they're thinking about?

Harding: I'm afraid I would have to say yes. And I say "I'm afraid" because it isn't in the best interests of the legislative process to now have--I don't think Congress was ever designed to be a twelve-month institution. It makes it too much like a city council. And so the thinking of the members, they get involved in everything. Sam Rayburn used to say that any Congress that stayed in session after the Fourth of July was asking for trouble. Any Congress that stayed in session after Labor Day was in trouble. Now, in those days we used to get out June, July, August, period, and adjourn until the following year. Well, to be in touch with the constituents a person had to go home, should go home. Of course, today, we have travel means which enable a member to go home on a weekend, whereas a few years ago, for people west of the Mississippi River, there was no way of going except by train or automobile, and so there was no possibility of a member's going home for the weekend.

[Telephone rings]

Ingersoll: You were just telling about how the kind of spirit in Congress has changed with things moving so fast, and people not having the same amount of time to spend with each other. And one of the things I would like to spend some time talking about is anything you can remember about Helen Gahagan Douglas's relationships with her colleagues, particularly with people on that corridor. But we might go back first and I would like to ask you, when did you first meet Helen Gahagan Douglas?

Harding: I guess when she first came to Congress. We were not involved too much with her first election. We took a great deal of interest in it, not only because of the campaign committee, but because I'm also a Californian.

Ingersoll: Oh, I didn't realize that.

Harding: Yes, Palo Alto was my home town. And my dad was on the faculty at Stanford and UCLA in government and poli.sci.

Ingersoll: Well, let's see, your dad was called "Cap" Harding, wasn't he?

Harding: "Cap" Harding, yes.

Ingersoll: What was his proper name?

Harding: Victor.

Ingersoll: Victor, but he was always known as "Cap."

Harding: He was always known as "Cap." And you know it's a funny thing. Dad passed on in 1954, September 9. I remember because that's also Admission Day for California. Just the other day I was speaking on the telephone with former speaker McCormack [John] of Boston, and he was talking about my dad and he was referring to my dad as though he had had a conversation with him yesterday. I mean, it was a very living memory. So, I'm one of the individuals who, I guess, is a horrible example of nepotism or something, that so benefited from having had a father who did in his position leave a memory--leave a mark. My dad left a real mark.

Ingersoll: That's just marvellous.

Harding: It is, and I'm very, very proud of that.

Ingersoll: Evelyn Chavoor put it in terms of your being here at that time as a kind of apprentice to your father. Is that a fair way of putting it?

Harding: Well, that's true. I came, actually, with the committee the first time in 1946. However, with Dad having been in politics all his life, my first memory of a political campaign, believe it or not, was the 1920 presidential election, when he was assistant district attorney in Maricopa county, [Phoenix] Arizona.

Ingersoll: You grew up with politics then.

Harding: I grew up in politics, that's it. So, it wasn't anything foreign to me in that sense. And I always had a feeling and knack in working with Dad and Professor Charles Hickman Titus of UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles] on political statistics. I just liked it. And so we maintained the best statistical files, and redistricting file. You can't believe the change that's come about in the preparation and maintenance of political figures dealing with congressional districts and elections. There were no official records maintained in detail and the only ones that exist today for that period are those that we put together. In fact, I hold a copyright on the first United States Congressional Districts map, printed as one unit. And I got that in 1950, I think. And for quite some time that served as the map that they used in the State Department. The military used it, the government schools used it, and various institutions. I don't know, but maybe Berkeley or somebody uses it, too. But we specialized

- Harding: in the study of elections. And there was a gentleman by the name of Malcolm Moose--he used to be the Republican Chairman for Baltimore County--who took a great interest in the effects of presidential races on congressional races, and their influence on gubernatorial and senatorial races. So, our studies were in depth. When you say, what did we do, we had a ball, frankly, doing that which we liked to do, but doing something that nobody else was doing.
- Ingersoll: Yes. And all of these studies were things that you used, sometimes even--
- Harding: Oh, they were a great influence.
- Ingersoll: Were they needed in the work of the committee?
- Harding: Not only that but it was real thing, because we maintained congressional district statistics on a county by county basis. In those years there was no violation of the county line between two congressional districts. That's only a modern one-man, one-rate concept. Up to that time, within the City and County of San Francisco you wouldn't think of going outside and taking in part of Marin County, like the Burton [Congressman John L.] district does now. You just never did that. You would do everything. City and County of San Francisco are two districts, period. And Los Angeles, the districts were in county, you didn't go outside.
- Ingersoll: A much more natural kind of boundary than we have now.
- Harding. Well, this is what we thought was the natural geographic division.
- Ingersoll: And you, in the Democratic Campaign Committee, had election figures for all over the country.
- Harding: For all over the country. Plus the fact that both my dad and I loved to travel, a couple of old pack-rats, I guess, as far as travel was concerned. So, every district that was ever even closely contested we had physically been in. We would get acquainted with the county chairman, we knew the politics of that district, and I'm proud to say probably better than ninety-nine point nine percent. So, as a consequence, as the result of traveling, my dad was one of the few who in 1948 openly declared Truman [Harry S.] was going to win. And people laughed at that time and everything, but it was based upon the studies that we had made in the districts. We thought we were right. We could call districts for all races, and be pretty doggone accurate within two or three [misjudged districts], because you always had that much fluctuation. Well, we enjoyed a reputation for knowing what we were doing, and this was what I so appreciated with my dad. And he trained me in that capability. One of the things I miss in doing

Harding: what I'm doing today is being in that kind of situation. But you cannot learn political background by picking it up today and going to work for a political party, and think in six months you're going to know what the score is. You can't. And the worst part of it is that as a result of so many judicial orders and the redistricting so many times and in so many states--though surely well intentioned--they've broken political organizations. And one of the bad results of it is there's no continuity.

Ingersoll: Yes.

Harding: And the one real continuity that we've had--people say, "Well, how can that member of Congress get reelected all the time when she's a Republican or he's a Republican, and that's really a Democratic district?" It isn't just because of the prerogatives of the office. If he properly, if she properly uses those prerogatives in service to the constituency--I wish that some of these people who knock the idea of a member getting reelected because he's an incumbent--Maybe that incumbency provided a service to those people. This is the House of Representatives. He or she is representing a constituency, and the members of Congress represented their constituencies for years and years before we had these Washington representatives of so many areas or cities. Now even cities and states have their own paid lobbyist in Washington to look out for their interests. Well, under our concept of constitutional government, the House of Representatives provided the individual, before we got so big and complex, to handle the affairs. So why hear somebody saying, "Well, look that member of Congress is only an errand boy for his district." Doggone it, that's part of the job. You shouldn't have to hire an attorney, as a constituent, to have a voice to the federal government in protecting your rights, whether you're a businessman, an individual with a social security claim, or a veteran with a claim. Somebody should be able to look after your interests, and that's what you, the representative, are supposed to do in my book.

Well, this is the change, one of the changes that's come about. So, many people think now, unless Congress is voting on something they aren't worth anything. They measure everything by how many laws are passed, as though passing a law, or appropriating money is going to in itself solve the problem. It doesn't.

Ingersoll: It's how much the people really do represent their districts. That was an interesting district that Helen represented. You said you watched the first election even though you didn't have anything to do with it as an official--

Harding: She was one of the few who proved the point that you don't really

Harding: have to live in your district to represent it. But, of course, being from Los Angeles County as she was, why, that is such a mixed-up, melting pot of everything.

Ingersoll: Yes, and her district was especially like that.

Harding: Especially a conglomerate type population, where everything is just so distorted. You didn't have any one ethnic group, or any one background. And California, of course, itself, is a little bit like--when immigration from Europe was affecting the United States, well, immigration into California from the other states, and from even south of the border was coming in--still comes in. I can remember Long Beach, for instance, was just considered "New Iowa." In fact, a lot of people wanted to call it "New Iowa" because so many people came from the Midwest. And so, they had a Midwestern way of thinking. It was a very conservative area. They had conservative members of Congress up until Clyde Doyle came into Congress.

But, Helen Douglas, speaking of her, we didn't appreciate it at the time how much she was one of the pioneers of women taking an active role.

Ingersoll: Did it surprise you when she was elected that first term?

Harding: Well, as we used to say, nothing surprises in California, being Californians. But, she was such a dynamic person. She was so articulate. Well, her district was the type of district that you really wouldn't expect a woman to represent.

Ingersoll: No. Many of the laboring class, not the intellectuals, not the stars.

Harding: But, they had faith in her, and in her interest in helping people. And I think that's one of the reasons she was so effective.

Ingersoll: Describe her first as a campaigner, please.

Harding: She would just keep on the go, and on the go, and on the go. And I don't think she knew what the word "fatigue" was. She wore everybody else out [laughs]. She didn't seem to wear out. And, of course, she had a pretty good name before she ran for Congress. She had things going for her. She really didn't have to scratch for her last dollar.

Ingersoll: There were times when her funds were pretty low, though, I guess.

Harding: This is true. My goodness, do you know when I first came back here, I came back with the congressman from the old eighth district of California, and at that time that district ran from Daly City



Harding: to King City. It now encompasses all or parts, I think, of nine congressional districts. Well, that's a long way--it's half the distance to Los Angeles. And we used to put on total campaigns for less than \$5000. This meant a lot of volunteer work, it meant that a lot of people who worked on the campaigns hoped they might be appointed first or second class postmasters. But, it meant that a lot of people did the actual publicity work that now advertising agencies do.

Ingersoll: And get paid for.

Harding: You didn't have television. Everybody wants money to take part in politics. Everybody before thought they had to earn from politics the right to be considered-- And those days, remember, we were in the Depression when I first came here, so there were a lot of people who were not doing the types of work that they wanted to do. They might have had some job, but it was only a job because they were fortunate enough to get it, not what they wanted to do. So, you had people who were willing to work in the hope of future employment. Now you have to pay them so much an hour, and it's a pretty big sum. So, this is one of the reasons why the cost has gone up. It wasn't because we had any ability to run cheap campaigns, we wouldn't like to do that. But, today, they ask phenomenal amounts of money. Well, to me it is shocking, and one of the reasons is because I think I've always felt that half of the political money spent is wasted. The only problem is you can't figure out which half. And so you spend the money for fear that you might not be doing the thing that would have assured you victory if you'd done it.

Helen Gahagan Douglas's Campaign Abilities, Colleagues on "Red Gulch," and Speeches for Other Campaigns

Ingersoll: What about that particular point in relationship with Helen? Do you have any feelings about her abilities to raise money and to allocate it in a campaign? Of course, she had her campaign manager, but she probably had something to do with it.

Harding: But during those campaigns she was running, we didn't have the great need for the money, plus the fact that she was in demand at various groups as a speaker. So, she was able to move around. She helped many another person.

Ingersoll: Did she?

Harding: Oh, yes.

Ingersoll: Can you remember any of the people by any chance?

Harding: They were normally the people of her own political persuasion, naturally, because she had a goal, she had a very real goal, and that goal was very much in tune with the ideals of, say, the Roosevelt administration. So, she was not out of gear with the needs of the times. She was a very able representative that fulfilled that need, that political need, that philosophical need. And she had the ability to reach, and to touch, those people that needed her assistance. After all, that's what politics is all about. You want somebody to help you, and this doesn't mean that you're overly selfish in any way. You need help, and so you reach out, and if there's a person that looks like he can help you, they're for you. This is why they were for Helen Douglas. She represented the help her constituency felt they needed, and they sure as heck did.

As I say, looking back on the political life of Helen Douglas you realize what a pioneer she was. My goodness, up to the time she was active, we'd had a few here in the Congress, but very few women who had played a prominent role. Some of them who were here before had really followed on as the result of their husbands having been in Congress. And she didn't, she did it all on her own. And, of course, at that time, California was noted for being a very liberal state--in fact, much more so than most of the rest of the country. And it just so happened that that corridor over in the Cannon Office Building where we were all located had a great number of Californian congressmen, as we called everybody then, before we used the female term.

Ingersoll: I understand from Evelyn Chavoor that it also had the name of "Red Gulch" because there were such red hot liberals there.

Harding: Yes, that's right.

Ingersoll: How did it get that name, do you remember by any chance?

Harding: We called it "Red Gulch" and we also called it "Red Row." We referred to it that way because we had so many liberals.

Ingersoll: And many of them were from California?

Harding: Oh, yes.

Ingersoll: Can you remember who some of them were at that time?

Harding: Oh, there was--

Ingersoll: Clyde Doyle was there?

Harding: Clyde Doyle, Byron Scott, Bill Traeger were in there for a while either on that corner or nearby.\* At that time, the forerunners, we also had Lee Metcalf; Mike Mansfield was in the other end of the row down there. We had people who later played quite a role, but I hadn't thought of that aspect.

Ingersoll: These were people who were Helen's colleagues?

Harding: Oh, yes, at that time, and some of them were there over a period of time, while others were in and out type of operations. But even as revolutionary as some of the programs were at that time, by today's standards they would be considered very moderate. This was when Social Security was considered to be a very socialistic, liberal movement.

Ingersoll: Can you remember any particular incidents that would give any feeling about the way Helen worked with her colleagues? We might start with the colleagues who were back there on the corridor, around you, around her.

Harding: I'm trying to think when Gracie Pfof came in.  
[end tape 1, side A; beging tape 1, side B]

Ingersoll: You were going to tell me anything you can remember about her relationships with colleagues.

Harding: I was just trying to think as to how she as a female member of Congress operated differently from another female member of Congress at that given time.

Ingersoll: That would be very interesting.

Harding: And I was thinking of Gracie Pfof who was from Idaho. Once again just as Helen truly reflected her constituency, Gracie represented hers which was Idaho, so therefore power and reclamation were the paramount issue. So, she became "Hell's Belle" because of Hell's Canyon Dam which she fought, and fought, and fought for, and finally she was successful.

Helen Douglas operated probably more effectively than the average member of Congress right from the word go, because Helen Douglas was probably accepted by more members across the board in the social strata than most new members of Congress.

Ingersoll: Was she?

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\* Mr. Harding later said that others on the corridor were: George Outland, Andrew Biemiller, Hugh DeLacy, Ellis Patterson, and Dick Bolling.

- Harding: Oh, yes. Because, I mean with the Los Angeles movie-type background, she was at home in her district which was quite unlike her own personal life, and she was also at home in a drawing room or in a group of actors and actresses. No matter where she was, she always made herself at home. She had that ability, and that's a pretty darn good--
- Ingersoll: And was she able to relate to almost anybody, from almost any background?
- Harding: If there were very many that she couldn't relate to, I don't think they ever came to my attention, and I think we pretty much would have observed that. Her vision, her peripheral vision, was excellent and she could zero in on the problems. Her specialty was the social problems. And, as I say, a person like a Gracie Pfof, and some of the others, were more concerned with the economic development of the area. When you think of Helen Douglas you think of people. And this was where her strength was. She was the pioneer female activist in the Congress.
- Ingersoll: Would you say that on that corridor where they were all liberals, or many of them were anyway, that she was the leader among that group?
- Harding: Helen Douglas was not a group leader in the sense of being a joiner. She represented a set of principles, and desires, political goals, which were common with a lot of other people for that time, but she operated as Helen Douglas. We didn't have caucuses like a Black Caucus, like a Women's Caucus, like this caucus and that caucus that we have today. She had her strength as Helen Douglas.
- Ingersoll: You might say that there was a liberal faction though, mightn't you?
- Harding: Oh, I guess you might, but the strings weren't drawn. We didn't have a Democratic Study Group, or the liberal groups. They weren't organized at that time. You had to kind of fight your way as an individual, I guess. But she had that ability [laughs] so it didn't bother her any. She didn't need the groups' strength. As I say, she was pretty good press copy no matter where she was. And she did this in plenty of other sections of the country-- make good press copy. She was a known individual.
- Ingersoll: Was she the kind of person who asked for advice of colleagues or maybe of yourself in the committee?
- Harding: Helen Douglas was a very determined political individual who would fight with her last ounce of strength for her principles,

- Harding: and go down to defeat many times because she was a little bit out in front of what could be done at that time. From a practical sense, I would say probably she didn't stop to listen sometimes. But, from the standpoint of getting another viewpoint, she would listen. And then make up her own mind, but once she made it up, she was a pretty good tiger. [Laughter]
- Ingersoll: As a woman, would you say she was able to reject the advice of men without making them angry at her?
- Harding: You know, we didn't think about those things really so much with her. She could be fiery. She was also a very gracious person and a beautiful person in the true sense of the word, you know; and I think this was why she probably got by without making people mad, whereas they might have been angered if she had been abrasive. I won't mention any names of the current group of female activists in politics, but some of them are probably known for their abrasiveness as much as they are for what their goals may be. The fact is their goals become minimal, or their success becomes minimal just because of their approach. And she wasn't that way.
- [Tape turned off]
- Ingersoll: Can you recall any incidents when Helen perhaps worked with the Democratic Campaign Committee?
- Harding: Oh, yes, yes. Many, many times, and probably the greatest contribution she could make was that she was so gracious in accepting speaking engagements for us, with various groups. And she was not one of those who had to have a million dollars to go out to these groups. We would try to cover expenses, and this sometimes was difficult. But, if she could accomodate her colleagues or the campaign organization by making the contribution of addressing a group, she was most willing to do it. She liked it too. She wasn't a bit backwards about telling people what her viewpoint might be. And she knew what she was talking about, and they liked her.
- Ingersoll: Was she well-organized as a speaker?
- Harding: She didn't have a prepared text, if that's what you mean. She was extemporaneous most of the time. I would say that Evie Chavoor was one of those who kept taking care of the details for her. Evie kept in the background a lot; but Evie was, is, has been, the staff sergeant, the lieutenant for the commanding officer. And I think while Evie Chavoor and Helen Douglas have been the closest of personal friends, as far as their political lifetime goes, there was never any question as far as I observed as to who the boss was. Well, I just love them both as far as

- Harding: that goes. I have the greatest admiration for both of them. Although, as I say, maybe you can admire and respect a person without necessarily agreeing with them one hundred percent of the time.
- Ingersoll: Surely. And particularly people with strong opinions as Helen had.
- Harding: That's right. And I think maybe that's one of the things-- Helen Douglas was a little bit ahead of her time, and that's why-- and I guess all pioneers are that when you get down to it. Thank goodness we have those pioneers or we would never make progress. Even though at times, sometimes you think we're trying to go too fast.
- Ingersoll: Would the Democratic Campaign Committee ever have asked her to slow down on some of these policies that were ahead of their time? Was that their function at all?
- Harding: Oh, no, the congressional committee never set foot in the house, never. This was up to the leadership, to the Sam Rayburns and the others who set policy. We were always very, very practical because what would be right for Helen Douglas in Los Angeles County might defeat a Democrat in Fresno, or in some other section of even California. So, you have to get elected before you can become effective.
- Ingersoll: That would be the most important thing.
- Harding: It is. A lot of people say that's a terrible, terrible, almost immoral thought, to think you have to get elected. Of course, you have to get elected to be a member. The only way you can carry out what you say you want to do is to be there to do it. And, of course, I don't know of any group of people who are less effective than ex-members of Congress, in the role of ex-member, except on particular items where they have expertise better than anybody else, such as somebody like George Miller who still comes around on science matters because he's an expert. But, as far as being an ex-member of Congress and being effective on legislation outside of the field where they're an expert, forget it.
- Ingersoll: Yes. You said the Democratic Campaign Committee wasn't involved in her first campaign. Were they involved very much in later campaigns, particularly the 1950?
- Harding: Thank goodness she was one of those--and you look back over her statistics, she was one of those who could take care of herself.
- Ingersoll: Pretty much, could she?

Harding: Your campaign organization, and the national ones especially, don't have the time or the resources to spend for everybody. So, you hit where the need is the greatest, and thank goodness she was able to take care of herself most of the time. So, she was making contributions to the rest of the people. I don't know, probably on a ten to one ratio, rather than the other way around.

### The 1950 Campaign

Ingersoll: What about that 1950 campaign? Could that have gone any differently if it had been run any differently; in your opinion?

Harding: Well, of course, the opposition is what sets the tone in the campaign. How well I can remember all those red papers and everything else he [Richard Nixon] did. We were in the climate, in the political climate at that time, where she and quite a few other people in political life were the victims of prejudgement. And the paintbrush was pretty broad, and a certain gentleman who is now residing in San Clemente was mighty effective in using it because the time permitted, the political time. At that time, the Murray Chotiners were setting the tone of politics. In fact, right at that time, the Republicans put out a book, a pamphlet it was really, on how to run a campaign, and Murray Chotiner was the author of it. And, God rest his soul today, but that was so vicious that I reproduced it, and I sent it to every Democratic candidate throughout the country as a warning, "This may happen in your area." It also had a lot of good practical political ideas in it. They were very practical political people. But, it was an anything-goes type campaign, exactly the campaign which was used against Helen Douglas. So, it wasn't just Richard Nixon who planned the operation of the entire Republican party at that time, and that is at the congressional level. Well, I still have some copies of that old document around.

Ingersoll: Do you really?

Harding: I thought for a while--In fact, I thought just before Mr. Chotiner's death that he was getting back into politics. And we thought it was coming back so we dug it out again, and reread it, and the same thing was beginning to emerge. Dirty tricks.

Ingersoll: There was an article that was written in California Quarterly with the thesis that it wasn't so much the red-baiting that Nixon did as the ineffectual way that Helen's campaign met it that really caused her defeat. Do you have any feelings about that?

Harding: Well, I can only answer that in what I just said a minute ago. That this was a period of time where the Joe McCarthys were getting away with murder--political murder on the American people and individuals in politics. The Joe McCarthys, the Richard Nixons operating at that time, were practicing something, and preaching something that any demagogue--and they were demagogues, political demagogues--could sell, because people bought. They feared everybody--my goodness, all you had to do was just hint that there might be something wrong, and most people would say, "Oh, we'd better stay away." Remember that Helen Douglas was part of the, well, the Beverly Hills type movie group, and at that time, remember, they were all being castigated--all the writers, all the producers, and everything else. So, she was a victim of the times, as well as of ineffective campaigning. Sure, you lose, and somebody always finds a reason.

I hear my friends, and I well remember the 1946 congressional campaigns, and they were all saying, "Oh, well, the vote was light, we didn't get the Democratic vote out." Shucks, if we'd gotten the Democratic vote out--the Democrats were coming out all right, and they were voting against us. Why were they voting against us? They were damn sick and tired of the war, they were sick and tired of no soap in the grocery stores, they were sick and tired of having to wait in line to buy any meat, and it was high-priced and tough.

And so, people go along at times in this idea that they're going along because of organizations. I think many times it's in spite of organizations. I don't think you need these great big fancy master-minded deals. If you can get out and you represent something, you've done a good job. Your people in your area are taken care of. Where she got caught, from the political standpoint, is that a member going from the House to the Senate type approach, isn't known, hasn't rendered this personal service to the constituency. And this doesn't mean that you, as a House member, have to have done something for a person to have granted them a service, if they think you've been a good representative for them, you've rendered them a service, without ever having a letter from them or to them. So, you don't have that when you move to the Senate. Senators and governors are caught in these waves, and this is why House members can sustain themselves when they're running for re-election. That same House member who is undefeatable in his district goes down to defeat in a Senate race.

Ingersoll: And that's what happened, of course, for her. Of course, Nixon, too, was moving from the House to the Senate.

Harding: Oh, sure. But they were practicing politics on that which they could affect and that's all they had to do was--



Ingersoll: So, the good record couldn't make up for what he was doing.

Harding: People paid no attention to the record.

Ingersoll: It was a whole new ball game.

Harding: And I'm afraid she lost before it started. No matter what you could do. Some of these cases you can batten down the hatches and try and ride out the storm. [Laughter]

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas's Legislative Style

Ingersoll: Do you remember any situations, or anecdotes about Helen that would give us some indication of how she worked with colleagues, or how sometimes she had difficulties while she was in the House.

Harding: That's very hard to answer because she was not noted for being on the floor at all times. When she was on the floor she'd take part. I don't know. She was never considered a wizard as far as parliamentary procedure goes. She would rather charge her way through, by her persuasion and ability to express herself.

Ingersoll: Were there people who were put off by this, do you think?

Harding: Well, there are always people who are put off, no matter what you do. Yes, I would say that now that we've seen what a change has come about in the acceptance of women in politics, she was in politics when it was not the accepted thing. There was an automatic resistance--you were referring to it a little bit earlier--and I said she was able to overcome a lot of it because of her charm; there was a normal reticence on the part of most men in government as far as accepting a woman or her philosophy. In other words, you had to be twice as good to get anything done as perhaps a man would have been under the same circumstances. And she was that twice as good. And that's the only reason she got things done. Now, she would have been a wizard today. Oh boy, she would really have done-- And the country needs a Helen Douglas now. She was a unique person in politics, but being unique she was also-- She wasn't against team play, but once again, she was not part of a pack, she was an individual.

Ingersoll: Is that rare in Congress, as you have seen it through times? Or, are there lots of people who operate that way?

- Harding: I know a lot of people who have felt that they've had to operate that way to get attention. And I think she probably sensed that, and felt that, and probably it was true. Now, it isn't as true today as it was then. But, and I have to be awfully careful what I say without pinpointing certain individuals-- Let's put it this way. There are members of Congress who are better than others who are not effective, just totally ineffective. She wasn't so foolish as some of her liberal friends at that time, and since then, who insisted on always losing a battle but making noise. She was not that politically foolish. I have seen members offer amendment after amendment and go down to solid defeat on every one of them. They seemed to be getting some satisfaction from seeing blood on the floor even though it was their own blood.
- Ingersoll: There were things like the housing issues. She had to fight and lose, fight and lose.
- Harding: She was smart enough-- That's right, but they were steps forward. There was a purpose to what she was doing. As I say, I think maybe some men were jealous of her because she was accepted by so many people in and out of the government. Whereas they, perhaps, were only accepted among their own political group or in their own area. She had a wide appeal. She may have represented a constituency, but she also represented the interest of a lot of people. And if we hadn't had the political climate come along at the time as it did, who knows where she might have finally wound up. I don't think it would have been in defeat.
- Ingersoll: And what a good thing it would have been for us, really. Were there any specific men whom you can remember whom she may have had to work particularly hard on to win over, and maybe was not ever able to win over?
- Harding: Well, you don't win over individuals as individuals around here. I think with the, as I say, the reticence of most men, they finally came to tolerate her because of her abilities, and I think they thought they were being kind because they tolerated her. And I would say that all women didn't buy her.
- Ingersoll: How large a group would you say that was of men proportionate to the whole who may have felt that way? Do you have any feeling for that?
- Harding: I don't think so, because it was so changing. In other words, there weren't so many individuals in any one particular group who were always against her, except the people who--well, the extreme conservative following, and the rural following didn't have too much in common with her political philosophy so they

- Harding: were always against it. But it was an honest difference, and not just because she was out there for the people. She was a great fighter for the rights and dignity of the individual.
- Ingersoll: You were saying that all women didn't like her. Do you think there were some who were jealous of her beauty and her intelligence, and that sort of thing?
- Harding: Without mentioning any names, I can assure you there were. [Laughs] Yes, the fact is that I think some of the greatest differences were between Helen Douglas and women, for that reason. By the way, I'm going to have to cut this off.
- Ingersoll: Of course. May I just ask you one more question, and that is, could you make a comparison between the style and the reception that Helen Gahagan Douglas got and what you see of women in Congress today?
- Harding: As I mentioned earlier, Helen Douglas was ahead of her times. I think that because Helen Douglas had so many attributes over and above just her political appeal, she was able to sell what political philosophy interested her at a given time. There were her avenues, and she knew how to use them. And she did use them. So, I think many times some of the modern political ladies would be very, very jealous of Helen Douglas because by comparison I think she would far outshine them in accomplishment, and in acceptance by her colleagues in general. Yes, she was not only ahead of her times in the political sense, she was ahead of her times in creating acceptance of working with female members of the legislative body. It's a very difficult role, I imagine, for a woman to be in politics. Difficult from the word "Go". But, to be successful, means that you have something extra. She had the something extra which would work just as well today. In fact, it would probably work a lot better today because she wouldn't have to overcome some of the hurdles that she did have to at times.
- Ingersoll: And that something extra, was it charm? What would you say?
- Harding: I guess you might say, to use an old cliché, she had "it". [Laughter]
- Ingersoll: Well, I certainly have appreciated very much the time in your busy schedule you have given to do this. These are insights that will be very useful for people to have.
- Harding: We've been talking about an individual whom I'm sure you've surmised I'm very, very fond of. A wonderful woman I have great admiration and respect for.
- Ingersoll: A great many people do today, I think.



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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Frank Rogers

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND THE 1950 PRIMARY CAMPAIGN

An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
in 1976

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

In an effort to find a man who had been intimately associated with the 1950 Democratic Senatorial primary in California, I was advised by Evelyn Chavoor to talk with Frank Rogers. Previously the name of Hal Winkler had been suggested to me, but neither Evelyn Chavoor nor Frank Rogers knew of him. Mr. Rogers, Evelyn Chavoor told me, had been a publicity and speech writer for Manchester Boddy who was Helen Gahagan Douglas's Democratic opponent. Only in the course of the interview did I learn that he had also been the publicity writer for Helen Douglas in her first campaign for Congress and that he had written the resignation statement for Senator Sheridan Downey.

When I called him to ask to talk with him, Mr. Rogers gave the quick consent of a newspaperman who knows how important an interview is to an interviewer. Since he currently works part time for the American Petroleum Institute, he suggested that I call him there where he could say, with engagement calendar in hand, how soon we could set up an appointment.

The interview took place on December 8, 1976 in one of a maze of offices in the American Petroleum Institute complex on the sixth floor of a downtown Washington, D.C. office building. I had worked out an outline of questions which he looked over rapidly. He felt they were relevant to his experience and insights, and we went to work. Several times in the course of the interview we were interrupted by phone calls, in which people seemed to be asking his advice about how certain information dealing with the petroleum industry should be presented. His answers to their concerns were quick, sure, and pointed, though never curt. Minutes later, knowing exactly where we had stopped, he was back to my questions with the same sort of reasoned responses.

When I returned the transcript of the interview to him, he was concerned lest his view of the 1950 primary be the only one considered. I assured him that other interviewees would at least touch on it, and that readers would appreciate his views as one perspective on a very complicated campaign. With the heavy black pen of an editor, he answered my questions, made a few additions, and approved.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

26 May 1978  
Takoma Park, Maryland



V HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND THE 1950 PRIMARY CAMPAIGN

[Interview 1: December 8, 1976]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Frank Rogers: Publicity Writer for Helen Gahagan Douglas in 1944

Ingersoll: Would you tell me just a little bit about your own background, Mr. Rogers? Are you a Californian yourself?

Rogers: I was, of course, for many years. I've been in Washington now since 1945, with the exception of one year. I still think of myself as a Californian who has lived in Washington and Virginia all those years. In California, I was an active newspaperman up to and through Helen Gahagan's first campaign for Congress.

Ingersoll: Was that always for the Los Angeles Daily News?

Rogers: No, I worked in Ventura, California, and Santa Ana, California, and San Diego, and in Los Angeles. I think Helen first ran for Congress in '44.

Ingersoll: Nineteen forty-four was the first of the campaigns for Congress.

Rogers: I was her publicity agent on a part-time basis while I was still working for the Daily News.

Ingersoll: You were?! Starting in '44. Were you the publicity agent for all of the three congressional campaigns?

Rogers: No, just that one.

Ingersoll: Just the first one.

Rogers: Actually, at that time, I was night city editor of the Daily News. The Daily News had always supported Helen Gahagan, and working for her part time gave me an opportunity to supplement

- Rogers: my income, and to indulge in what had become sort of a hobby with me, that is, political writing. So, I was Helen's press agent during her first campaign for the Congress.
- Ingersoll: That was a paid job, not a volunteer job, then?
- Rogers: That's right. I remember I bought my first hat with some of that money. It didn't pay very much, but it was welcome money at the time--we had two small children then. Besides it was fun.
- Ingersoll: Would you mind telling me how much that was paying?
- Rogers: I think I made thirty dollars a week for part-time work with Helen.
- Ingersoll: One of the things we're interested in is just how campaigns were run in those days.
- Rogers: I don't remember how I fell into this job. Helen's campaign manager--Ed Lybeck, a professional campaign organizer--got me into it. My job was simply to write press releases and help prepare advertisements and that sort of thing. I don't think I ever did any speech writing as such, although I might have. It was a long time ago.
- Ingersoll: How did you first meet her?
- Rogers: I think I met her through George Outland, who was then a member of Congress. When Mr. Outland first ran for Congress from Ventura County. I also wrote Mr. Outland's publicity for the finals. In the primaries of that campaign--I should say that I had sort of a liking for politics on a part-time basis--I did the publicity work for Senator [James] McBride[California State Senate], who ran against Mr. Outland in the primaries. After the primaries, I did the same job for Mr. Outland. I think I met Helen Gahagan and Ed Lybeck through either George Outland or maybe Chet Holifield or Harold Lane who was Chet's field man.
- Ingersoll: Do you remember anything about her in those days that seems particularly significant to you?
- Rogers: Well, a few little things, perhaps. She was a very intense person but a delight to work for, because she would tell you what she wanted to say and you'd go ahead and write it; there was very little hassle about it. Incidentally, it was a very close election; I think she won by eighty-seven votes or something like that.
- Ingersoll: In that 1944 campaign.
- Rogers: Yes. In what was normally a very solid Democratic constituency.

- Rogers: But she had a hard time winning for one reason. She was one of the first candidates before or since, that I have been aware of, who lived in one district but ran in another. There is no legal barrier to running for election from a congressional district in which you do not reside.
- Ingersoll: That must be very difficult. I understand that there was some feeling that people like Hawkins [Augustus F.] should really have been the representative. Did you know anything about that in those days?
- Rogers: I don't remember too much about that. I remember there was a big field, and all her Democratic opponents made a big issue of her nonresidency--although this was, you know, a bedroom district, lots of rooming houses, that sort of thing. It wasn't strictly a residential, neighborhood district in the sense that a town would be.
- Ingersoll: Yes. Was there much of a point of her being a woman--did that bother people, do you think?
- Rogers: I don't recall that it did, no. As I remember, she did get endorsed by the incumbent member who was retiring--I can't even think of his name--who represented that district for years.
- Ingersoll: Is that Tom Ford, perhaps?
- Rogers: Yes. Anyway, as I say, there was a big field in the Democratic primary, and she won the nomination by a very narrow margin. The number "eighty-seven votes" comes to my mind; I don't know if that's accurate or not.
- Ingersoll: How did she impress you, as a person and as a politician, perhaps in comparison to the other politicians whom you'd written for?
- Rogers: I hadn't had all that much experience to compare her with other politicians. But as a person, she was fine. She was obviously sincere in what she was trying to do, at times quite emotional about it, but very determined. On the other hand, she was a real person.

I remember one time, early on in that campaign, the Hearst paper in Los Angeles--there were two of them at the time, I've forgotten which one--ran a very dirty article about some other Democratic candidate. Helen's campaign manager picked up word that they were preparing a similar article about Helen, including charges of illegitimate children and the whole bit. So we had a very serious staff meeting one day to discuss this, and Helen came in and wanted to know what we were talking about. We hadn't

- Rogers: told her about this thing. We said, "You'd better tell us what we can say in answer." Helen just laughed and said, "Don't answer it," and walked out. [Laughter] It wouldn't bother her what they were going to say about her, as long as she obviously knew it wasn't true.
- Ingersoll: Did you get the feeling, as she was giving you her thoughts to be written up for publicity, that she was a well-organized sort of person?
- Rogers: Well, Helen had an artistic mind rather than an orderly mind, I would say. Not organized in the cut-and-dried sense that a business executive would be organized, but she always knew what she wanted to do and where she was going, I think.
- Ingersoll: So her direction was there, if not the organized points.
- Rogers: When she got in trouble, she could rely on her dramatic talents to help, naturally. [Laughter]
- Ingersoll: Do you feel she often did that--
- Rogers: Yes, yes.
- Ingersoll: --in her speech making and in the way she wanted publicity presented?
- Rogers: Yes, sure. This was her natural talent.
- Ingersoll: That was her flair, really, wasn't it?
- Rogers: Sure. But don't forget, she did have some business background--helped run her father's business in Florida, I think.
- Ingersoll: Do you have any particular recollections, or were you ever there when she was meeting people during campaigns?
- Rogers: Yes, I'm sure I went to a number of meetings. In that district, the big thing was to go to churches, particularly the colored churches, and to small house parties. She was very good at one-on-one with people; she could grab somebody in a group and have a very serious talk about whatever was on their mind. She got people's attention; it was hard not to pay attention to her.
- Ingersoll: Do you, by any chance, have any examples, any stories that you can bring to mind of times when perhaps she did get herself in difficulty but, with her flair for the dramatic, was able to pull it through?

Rogers: No, I couldn't cite any specific instances where she had to rely on theatrics to bail her out; it's just a general recollection I have of her.

Ingersoll: Yes. Did you ever have any sort of experience--or maybe in your own contact with her--where she could reject the advice of men without angering them, which is sometimes a problem women have?

Rogers: I never saw that come up, really. We all looked at Helen as a person, never thought of her as a woman versus man. So the idea of her being in politics wasn't all that big a thing, even among the old-pro politicians who were working in the campaign--it just wasn't an issue that you had to treat Helen differently or present her differently because she was a woman. In the first place, she had a name that was fairly well recognized, so you didn't have to overcome any identity problems.

But maybe it's because, in the newspaper business and elsewhere, I've never had to differentiate between women and men particularly. It was no oddity to me. I remember one point later in my career when I was city editor of the Daily News, I looked up and I could see about twenty-five women in the newsroom but no men--during the war. So, I was used to treating women as humans; it didn't occur to me to do otherwise.

Ingersoll: Surely. And you feel generally that other people, with Helen, could comfortably do the same?

Rogers: Yes, as far as the men go. Now, I suppose there were women supporting Helen who were what I'd call professional feminists.

Ingersoll: Were for her because she was a woman.

Rogers: Right, right.

Ingersoll: Do you think there were some women who were against her because she was a woman and because it was an uncomfortable sort of thing?

Rogers: I never saw much evidence of that. Remember, I had only a part-time role in her campaign and didn't know everything that was going on. I worked a few hours a day, and then off to this newspaper job. But I didn't see much evidence of that.

Ingersoll: Can you remember any particular publicity that you did for her that would be interesting to know about? Any times when you and she had to work out particular approaches to publicity?

Rogers: No. I generally worked under Mr. Lybeck. We'd decide on what approach we wanted to take and just went ahead.

Ingersoll: Would it usually be Mr. Lybeck who'd be working with you, or Helen, or the three of you together?

Rogers: I usually worked for Mr. Lybeck. I really didn't see all that much of Helen during the campaign. I saw more of her when I came back to Washington and she was in Congress and I was a Washington correspondent.

While I was here in Washington as a correspondent, I also had a radio program for a while, once a week or something like that. I would often interview members of Congress from California for the radio station. I remember I lined up Helen to do it one time, and this gave me quite an insight on the efforts that she put in here. Here she was a busy congresswoman (she may have been in her second term by then). We had a date to do this interview, and I think I went to her office something like nine o'clock in the morning with a list of questions I wanted to ask her. We worked all morning on how she would answer these questions--went over and over them. We had sort of a dry run, and then we went to the radio station, where we taped this interview, about five or six o'clock that night. It was only a fifteen-minute show. What I wanted to put over was that she devoted a full day to that fifteen-minute show, to the exclusion of everything else.

Ingersoll: It was worth that much to her.

Rogers: I'm not sure that it was--it was only a fifteen-minute interview show. But that's what she was going to do that day, and everything else went by the boards. I think she felt she was helping me as much as herself.

Manchester Boddy: Opponent of Helen Gahagan Douglas in the 1950 Primary

Ingersoll: That's very interesting. Let's talk a little bit about that 1950 primary campaign. You then were the Washington correspondent for the Los Angeles Daily News. Am I right that Manchester Boddy, who ran against her in the primary as another Democratic candidate, was the owner of the Los Angeles Daily News at that time?

Rogers: That's right--editor and publisher.

Ingersoll: Editor and publisher. Before we get on to Boddy, do you have any idea about why Senator Downey [Sheridan] retired from the race?

Rogers: Yes, I have a very good idea.



Ingersoll: Why was that?

Rogers: He had taken a poll that showed him he could not beat Nixon [Richard]. In fact, he was giving the Democratic politicians in California a very bad time before he dropped out because he wasn't answering his mail, he wasn't answering his phone calls. They wanted him to decide whether he was going to run again or not, and he seemed unwilling to make this decision.

When you're a Washington correspondent, particularly when you're writing for the only Democratic paper in town, you get caught up in a lot of this stuff. So I well remember Senator Downey called me at home about ten o'clock at night and he said, "Frank, I've decided I'm not going to run again. Would you write a statement for the press and put it out to the press, and announce my decision not to run." I said, "What do you want to say?" He said, "You know me well enough. You write it." I said, "Senator, I'll be happy to. Don't you want to wait until you see a copy?" He said, "No. Whatever you say will be all right with me." So I wrote Senator Downey's announcement that he was not going to run, and gave it out to the press. I don't think the senator ever saw that until his dying day, unless he read it in the papers. That was not the reason he wanted to state publically, but the fact is that the polls showed that he could not beat Nixon and he just didn't want to hassle it. At that time, of course, I had no idea that Mr. Boddy was going to get in the race against Helen.

Ingersoll: Did you have anything to do with the campaign, or writing about it, when Boddy did get into the race?

Rogers: Oh yes. When Boddy got into the race, they called me home from my job in Washington. He got in the race very late, as you may remember; I don't know whether it was sixty days or ninety days before the primary election. I spent the entire time going out making field contacts with Mr. Boddy. I traveled with him the entire campaign. I wrote some of his speeches, though he was pretty much the kind of guy who wrote his own speeches or delivered them as he went along. I even wrote his column occasionally when he was on the road. At that time he had a daily or a three-times-a-week column that appeared on the front page of the Daily News. I wrote his press releases. I was not his campaign manager, but I was with him almost every minute of the campaign from the day he got into it.

Ingersoll: Was this at all a problem for you after you'd worked on the Helen Gahagan Douglas campaign in the past, and then doing this one?

Rogers: Yes, it was some problem. But I had great affection and respect for Mr. Boddy; I admired him greatly, as I did Helen. But I was also persuaded that Helen could not beat Nixon either.

Ingersoll: You felt that Boddy had a better chance, did you?

Rogers: If anybody had a chance, I felt it would be Boddy, as the middle-ground candidate.

Ingersoll: What did you feel he had going for him?

Rogers: Well, as he used to put it, "You know, so many hundred thousand people vote for me every day when they buy the Daily News at the newsstand for a nickel." He was quite a thinker. He was probably too abstract to be a good politician, but an interesting man with a lot of new ideas, great personality. He met people well in crowds. At least at that stage of the game, a lot of the professional Democratic political organizations felt that Helen was going to be a loser; that California wasn't ready for that liberal a candidate. History has sort of proved that. California has nominated an awful lot of liberal Democrats for the Senate side who never got elected.

Ingersoll: That's what happened often, it seems.

Rogers: It's only in recent years they've elected some liberal Democrats to the Senate.

Ingersoll: How true. Did Boddy have any political experience before that campaign?

Rogers: No.

Ingersoll: Frank Mankiewicz mentioned that this was something he hadn't had experience at before.

Rogers: Of course he hadn't. Neither had Helen the first time she ran for Congress. Everybody starts somewhere.

Ingersoll: True. What would your feeling be about Frank Mankiewicz's idea that he hadn't had experience, that he wasn't a very good speaker, that he put on a lot of Briticisms that were hardly natural to him--does that make any sense at all in your recollection?\*

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\* The primary campaign was not without incident. Downey had withdrawn, but not until he and his supporters among the conservative Democrats had appointed a candidate to oppose Douglas. He was Manchester Boddy, a Los Angeles publisher whose Daily News had been the only occasionally Democratic major city newspaper in the

Rogers: No. This is the first time I'd ever read Mankiewicz's observations, and very little of it rings true to me. Sure, he looked like the country gentleman type, but that was just his style. You know, he was a book salesman at one time in his life. So he was a great salesman, a great meeter of people, and I thought he was an excellent speaker, as a matter of fact. He comes across to Mankiewicz as a phony; he did not come across that way to me, and I had pretty close dealings with him. Even though he was editor and I was only the Washington correspondent, we had a good relationship. I always found that I could speak frankly with him and argue with him. So I just couldn't agree with Mankiewicz's characterization of the man at all.

Ingersoll: You mentioned some new ideas that Boddy had. Can you recall any of those now?

Rogers: I suppose you'd call them esoteric in this day and age, and ether-eal or whatever. He loved to hang on to slogans that he had made or become attached to. I can't give any concrete suggestions that he made, but he didn't follow the usual political line in promis-

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\* (cont.) entire state. Boddy was a curious candidate. He had no previous political experience of any kind. A vain, pompous man, his platform manner was diffident when it was not absurd. He affected a Colonel Blimp-type mustache and, indeed, an English manner generally. Even the first three letters of his first name were a self-Anglicizing effort, he having been born plain Chester Boddy.

Boddy carried the anti-Douglas colors in the Democratic primary, and when he was not droning his own incomprehensible philosophy of politics as history, he denounced Douglas as the candidate of the "red-hots" in the Democratic Party. His integrity in this effort, as well as his stout defense of California's right to the oil-rich Tidelands, came under question three years later. It was revealed that the Hearst Corporation, which published a rival newspaper in Los Angeles, paid Boddy \$250,000 per year for an option to buy his Daily News.\*\* It was also revealed that Boddy was indebted for \$2 million to various private oil interests. But, to paraphrase Ben Jonson, "that was in another time and, besides, the wench was [at least politically] dead."

Frank Mankiewicz, Perfectly Clear: Nixon from Whittier to Watergate, p. 50.

\*\* Frank Rogers wrote during editing:

If this is true, how come the News was bought by the Times, not Hearst. I never heard of this "revelation"! Who made it?

Rogers: ing everything and wanting to do everything for people. A philosopher more than a politician.

Ingersoll: You mentioned, I think, at least two reasons why the Democratic leaders asked Boddy to run--that he did have a large following in terms of people who knew his name from the newspaper, and that he was considered a good middle-ground candidate. Are there any other reasons you can think of why the Democrats ran him?

Rogers: Not really. I sort of seem to recollect that when they finally got to Sheridan Downey after he dropped out, he may have been one of those who suggested that Boddy run. It came as quite a surprise to me that Boddy would run, actually. I was quite surprised. It looked like sort of a hopeless cause, frankly. But, I wanted a candidate who could beat Nixon, and Helen couldn't.

Ingersoll: How did it look as time went on? Did it seem to pick up at all? What was the local reaction to him as you traveled around giving speeches and campaigning?

Rogers: I thought he had the nucleus of a pretty good organization, considering he got into the race so late. I think, as a matter of fact, he got 500,000 votes. I don't know what that would add up to percentage-wise, and today it doesn't look like many votes. But no, I don't think his campaign ever really gained any momentum after the original burst of enthusiasm.

In the first place, labor was solidly for Helen Gahagan. They had the money and they had the organization of the unions when it came to getting out the votes. So, I'd have to say off-hand that his campaign made not very much headway, maybe as much as you could expect. It was a very haphazard, spur-of-the-moment organization. I remember sometimes paying hotel bills with my own checks because there was no campaign organization. I later got paid back for all of that, but they weren't even set up to take care of the daily business of running a campaign.

Ingersoll: Do you have any recollections of what Helen's feelings were about your writing for Boddy's campaign?

Rogers: No, I really don't. I've only seen her a very few times since. I don't think there's any animosity as far as she's concerned. She's not that kind of person. When the primary campaign was over, I came back to Washington and had nothing further to do with the campaign, actually.

Ingersoll: What had been Boddy's stand before the 1950 campaign on Helen Gahagan Douglas during her campaigns as representative, for instance? Had he supported her or not?

Rogers: Yes, he'd always supported her when she ran for the House, and he supported her after he lost the nomination for Senate.

Ingersoll: So he was a big enough man--

Rogers: Oh yes. Well, the paper was strongly anti-Nixon.

Ingersoll: It was? I didn't realize that. Do you think Boddy's stand toward Helen Gahagan Douglas changed when he decided to go into the primaries? Do you think he had any reason why he didn't want her to run?

Rogers: Only, I think, the bottom line consideration that she probably couldn't beat Nixon.

Ingersoll: It was expediency, then, more than anything else.

Rogers: Well, if you want to call it that. Politicians--although Boddy was not a native politician, he had to have some political feel once he got into this--they're all rationalizers.

Ingersoll: Mankiewicz links Boddy and the Hearst press, whom he says took an option to buy his newspaper for I think it's \$250,000, and the fact that Boddy owed money to oil interests, big money, at that time--links these as one reason for his getting into the campaign when one of the campaign issues, of course, was offshore oil. Does that make any sense to you?

Rogers: No. Of course, I never heard all these things before, and I think that Mankiewicz is a little mixed up on the offshore oil bit. Of course, about the Hearst papers having an option, the Daily News was in fact sold to the Los Angeles Times and not to the Hearst papers.

The tidelands oil fight was a fight between the federal government and the state government, not a fight between the state government and the oil companies or the oil companies and the federal government. That's one thing they sent me back here to write about years ago, and I've been writing about it ever since. So, the oil companies, then and now, were in the position of saying, "We don't care who owns the so-called tidelands. We have to know so we know who we're going to pay our rent to--who's the landlord." The issue had to be resolved. It started way back-- [Telephone rings] So the tidelands oil fight that he refers to really was kind of a red herring.

Ingersoll: Your feeling is that it would not have mattered to the oil interests whether the state or the federal government had control of the tideland oil.

- Rogers: That's right. The newspaper, in fact, had taken the position that this was state property out to the three-mile limit. This was contrary to what Secretary [of the Interior] Ickes [Harold] contended, and brought suit; and the Supreme Court upheld Ickes and would have given the state control over these sub-sea resources, from the low-water mark out to the edge of the territorial seas. Congress eventually upset that decision by passing the Submerged Lands Act, which simply gave the state control over those sub-sea resources and gave the federal government control over the resources out beyond on the outer continental shelf. Now the oil companies do business with both state and federal, depending on who's the landlord. Their problem was, "Who is in charge here? Who do we apply to for a license? Who do we pay our rent to, our royalties to?" It had to be resolved.
- Ingersoll: Was this tidelands oil question an important issue in the Los Angeles Daily News during the campaign?
- Rogers: No, I don't think so. I can't remember that, per se, it was a big issue.
- Ingersoll: Did you have any notion, any idea, or isn't it possible that there was Republican money in Boddy's campaign?
- Rogers: I never saw any signs of it! [Laughter] In fact, we had very little money. I was not all that close to the financial end of the campaign, except I paid a few campaign bills out of my pocket and later was reimbursed. But I would have no way of knowing who contributed. I wouldn't know why any Republicans would have because all the polls that the professionals were taking showed Nixon winning. So why would they want to finance Boddy? It doesn't seem to make much sense to me.
- Ingersoll: Did Boddy get very much acceptance as he moved along and talked to people?
- Rogers: We had pretty good crowds for the means we had. Some congressmen, I remember the late Clair Engle particularly, took him around in their districts. This happened in some other places, too. Maybe the Democratic candidates were just hedging their bets, you know? I don't know. I thought he had pretty good acceptance.
- Ingersoll: Do you think he used any red-baiting techniques in his campaign?
- Rogers: I never really felt that he did. Mr. Boddy was not a radical, maybe not even a liberal in the accepted sense of the term. I remember that at one point in the campaign, I said, "Mr. Boddy, I think you're spending more time attacking Helen than you are Nixon. I think you ought to concentrate more on Nixon." He said, "Frank, you know, I've never even met Nixon." So I introduced

Rogers: Nixon to him. We happened to be in the lobby of a hotel in San Francisco, and I introduced Dick Nixon to Mr. Boddy, just so he could at least say he'd met him.

Ingersoll: What was Boddy's reaction after the introduction?

Rogers: I don't remember any particular reaction. He despised the man's politics and personal ethics even then, as many of us did. I suppose the ultra liberals might call it red-baiting, but to me it was maybe more a downgrading of Helen on some of the liberal issues than she deserved. But this is the sort of thing that happens in a campaign. You have to remember that Mr. Boddy was the man in the middle. In those days we had cross-filing in California and Nixon was on the Democratic ballot along with Boddy and Helen. I thought Boddy had to make a pitch for the conservative Democrats who might have been leaning to Nixon; I didn't think he had much chance with the more liberal Democrats. He was certainly less liberal than Helen, anyway, and it was natural for him to differ with her on some issues. As a practical matter, how could he have appealed to the more conservative Democrats if he didn't? I felt he had to show himself as less liberal than Helen but more liberal than Nixon--to put it simply.

In any event, it is my recollection that Nixon--not Boddy--was the red baiter. I know that a lot of charges along this line have been made but I just don't remember any blatant examples. But those were very emotional times and I suppose a lot of things were said and done then that wouldn't be said and done now.

Mr. Boddy is dead now and Helen Gahagan is seriously ill and I, for one, prefer to think only about their strengths, not their weaknesses.

Ingersoll: Surely. Do you remember what particular liberal issues of hers Boddy came out rather strongly against?

Rogers: Sure. Helen really had only one issue. I thought it was a non-issue then, and it still is, but she got her mind set on it, through I suppose some of the very left-wing crowd--the so-called 160-acre limitation issue.

Ingersoll: The Central Valley irrigation.

Rogers: She made it sound as though what the federal government wanted to do was break up every farm over 160 acres and divide it up among the paisanos, et cetera. This was never going to happen. In point of fact, people with more than 160 acres are still today getting water from the Central Valley Project. I thought she ruined herself just by making that almost the sole issue.

- Ingersoll: Was this an issue that Boddy picked up and fought against?
- Rogers: Well, that's my point, yes. Of course, Sheridan Downey very strongly opposed Helen's stand on that. He, too, had made it almost--
- Ingersoll: In fact, that was the one that all of the California delegation was opposed to--
- Rogers: It's interesting to look back now and see whether that could happen. The law hasn't changed, nothing has changed, and we're talking about twenty-six years ago.
- Ingersoll: To go back to the possible red-baiting, were you at all acquainted with Emmet Haggerty or Solon Beatty who moved from the Boddy campaign after his defeat to become Democrats for Nixon supporters?
- Rogers: I don't remember Solon Beatty at all, and the name Emmet Haggerty only rings a dim bell in my mind.
- Ingersoll: They were two who, later on, according to a San Francisco Examiner article [September 16, 1950], hung on to the notion that Helen Gahagan Douglas was a communist, and used this in the Nixon campaign. One had been connected with Veterans for Boddy, and the other with Lawyers for Boddy, earlier in the Boddy campaign.
- Rogers: I just don't remember enough about either one of those guys. I came right from Washington, got on a car or on an airplane or something with Mr. Boddy, and spent the next two months just traveling with him. I only saw the campaign from this side.
- Ingersoll: Yes. Do you remember Boddy making statements to the effect that Helen Gahagan Douglas voted as Marcantonio [Vito] did, and that sort of thing?
- Rogers: I don't think Mr. Boddy ever made that statement. All his opponents did.
- Ingersoll: But not Boddy. Do you think he ever by innuendo called Helen Gahagan Douglas a Communist?
- Rogers: Not that I can recollect, no.
- Ingersoll: So that the sort of things Nixon said later could hardly, in your recollection, have been picked up from the sort of thing that Boddy said.
- Rogers: Nixon didn't need any inspiration from Boddy when it came to red-baiting or whatever. He played that game from the first time when he ran against Jerry Voorhis.



Ingersoll: He had enough of his own, with Jerry Voorhis and--

Rogers: He got elected by calling Jerry Voorhis a candidate of the CIO when in fact the CIO had opposed him. Nixon didn't need any red-baiting clues from Mr. Boddy.

Ingersoll: Let's move on to the general election, then, when it was just Nixon-Douglas. Did you play any part in that part of the election?

Rogers: No. Right after the primaries, I came back to Washington and went about my business. That was not a presidential year, was it? No.

Ingersoll: No.

Rogers: No, I had no further part in the campaign. I came back to being a Washington correspondent.

Ingersoll: Did Boddy play any part in that election that you know of?

Rogers: I don't remember any. As I say, we did have an editorial endorsing Helen.

Ingersoll: Yes, the News supported Helen. Do you remember whether the Los Angeles Daily News ever used the Minneapolis editorial about Nixon's dirty tricks? You wouldn't have been close enough to the Los Angeles staff to know whether there was any talk about using it or not using it, would you?

Rogers: I'm not familiar with it.

Ingersoll: What do you think of the feeling that was expressed by at least one of the Helen Gahagan Douglas supporters in a letter, that the fact that most of the big city newspapers in California were pretty solidly Republican was one of the reasons for Helen Gahagan Douglas's defeat.

Rogers: I don't think that has any validity at all. They all opposed FDR, and he won. The Times, you know, didn't start picking winners until about ten years ago. Big newspapers have never been notably successful in that. I think it's probably true that most of them opposed her, but I don't think the newspapers have that much influence. Newspapermen like to think they do, but they don't. [Laughter]

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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Byron Lindsley

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND THE 1950 CAMPAIGN  
IN SAN DIEGO AND IMPERIAL COUNTIES

An Interview Conducted by  
Eleanor Glaser  
in 1976

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Judge Byron F. Lindsley  
1978



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Byron F. Lindsley, judge of the Superior Court of San Diego County and presiding judge of the Conciliation Court, was the chairman of Helen Gahagan Douglas's 1950 campaign in San Diego and Imperial counties. He was interviewed about that campaign at the suggestion of Mrs. Douglas.

Because Judge Lindsley was expecting to be called upon to testify in a law suit regarding segregation in the San Diego schools, he was unable to set a definite interview time before I left for San Diego.

On Monday morning, November 1, 1976 (the day before the national elections), I telephoned Judge Lindsley's chambers, found he was already in session, so I went to the courtroom where he was hearing a visitation case involving a divorced interracial couple. Judge Lindsley adjourned the hearings for a few minutes so that we might have a brief conference in his chambers. Despite his busy calendar, he made an appointment for that afternoon, setting aside several hours between court hearings.

Although I was late for our appointment, having rushed from a taping session with Mrs. Helen Lustig, Judge Lindsley graciously stated that this had given him an opportunity to go over his files. As I remarked during the taping, Judge Lindsley is an archivist's dream because he preserved so many documents from that intense campaign. He explained that he planned to use these as background material for writing he intended to do when he retired.

Judge Lindsley's large chambers are filled with books and documents, yet remain neat and uncluttered. On the bookshelves and walls are framed awards, quotations, and children's art. Among the plaques are two honoring him for his long-time involvement with the Urban League, one naming him the trial judge of the year in 1975, and an award for his work on behalf of San Diego's public schools. In addition there are several awards for bowling and pitching horseshoes--Judge Lindsley explained he is the champion horseshoe pitcher of the legal profession in San Diego.

During the interview Judge Lindsley sat at his desk, the tape recorder in front of him, looking through his files of 1950 campaign material. In responding to questions, Judge Lindsley was forthright and open. The years have not diminished his regard for Helen Gahagan Douglas nor his anger and contempt for the manner in which the opposition conducted its campaign.

In reviewing the interview transcript, Judge Lindsley enlarged upon a number of his statements and deleted one segment in order to spare someone's feelings. He most generously xeroxed numerous documents from the 1950 campaign for deposit in The Bancroft Library.

Eleanor Glaser  
Interviewer-Editor

10 July 1978  
Regional Oral History Office  
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Berkeley, California

## VI THE 1950 CAMPAIGN IN SAN DIEGO AND IMPERIAL COUNTIES

[Interview 1: November 1, 1976]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Early Interest in Politics

Glaser: What led up to your entrance into politics? I assume this took place after you came back from a stint in service.

Lindsley: I wasn't in service. During the war years I was working in Washington, D.C., and going to law school. I was employed as a personnel officer. At the end of my time, when I resigned, I was director of personnel of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., working under Archibald MacLeish.

As a matter of fact, in my Douglas campaign file, there is an exchange of letters between me and MacLeish about Helen Douglas and the campaign. I received a national campaign solicitation appeal for Helen by the 1950 Civil Liberties Appeal. I wrote him, telling him I was working for Helen and he wrote me a short letter right after the election in which he said he was sorry things went so badly for our gal, but she put up a good fight.

Glaser: Will you share that with me?

Lindsley: Oh sure, I'll make copies for you of everything that's here.

During that time I was going to Georgetown University Law School. I graduated from law school in June of 1944 and then took the District of Columbia bar exam and passed it. I then came out and took the California bar in October of '44. I had come from California; California was my home. Although I passed the California bar, I stayed on for another year with the Library of Congress. Then in October of '45 I took a leave of absence, rather than resign, to decide whether I wanted to practice law

Lindsley: or stay where I was. I loved life in Washington where I felt at the heart of what was happening. I came out to California and decided I wanted to practice law. I practiced in Los Angeles for about a year and a-half and then returned to San Diego, which was my home to begin with. I've been in San Diego County since 1931 and in California since 1927.

Glaser: And how did you move into politics?

Lindsley: I've been a political animal ever since I could breathe, I imagine. In my senior year in high school, in our civics class, we conducted a full scale national campaign. That was during the Roosevelt-Hoover campaign in 1932. As a civics class project, we organized a Republican National Committee and a Democratic National Committee and then put on the whole campaign from beginning to end.

I was the chairman of the Republican National Committee [laughing] at the time. Stan Conant, a friend of mine who is now a lawyer and head of Defenders, Inc. in San Diego, was the chairman of the Democratic National Committee. This was at Grossmont High School in San Diego County. Stan Conant is now a staunch Republican, and I am now a Democrat; we both have gone full circle.

We ran a full-scale campaign. We had our national committee meetings and conducted regular campaigns: there were speeches, bands, meetings, signs, loud speaker systems, a few vegetables and eggs to duck, and a vote. Hoover won the student election at Grossmont High School, although a study of the vote of the parents in the district showed that Roosevelt won hands down. So the kids there didn't follow the lead of their parents. It was the first of many political campaigns I've led.

I suppose that was the first intensive interest, but I've always been interested in politics. I think if you look at my high school annual, my ambition was to be in politics. It says: "Ambition: Lawyer and big politician." When I left Washington, D.C., and resigned from the Library of Congress, I received letters (I still have them somewhere) from those who worked with me there that said, "We'll see you back in Congress." And they expected me to come back; I was very political. I wish I could have. I always wanted to go to the U.S. Senate.

I came back to San Diego in '47 and immediately got involved in politics. Before that, while I was still sort of shifting back and forth between Los Angeles and San Diego, I represented Ellis Patterson, a former lieutenant governor now in Congress, who was running for the United States Senate in 1946. That was the year of Nixon's first campaign, too, as I remember, the year

- Lindsley: of the Nixon-Voorhis campaign. I wasn't involved in that. I represented Ellis Patterson running for United States Senate in the Democratic primary; his opponent was Will Rogers, Jr. Will Rogers won the Democratic nomination but lost to Bill Knowland in the general election. That's when Knowland became a national political figure.
- Glaser: Did you have anything to do with, or were you aware of the politics involved when Mrs. Douglas became a national committeewoman?
- Lindsley: I had nothing to do with that. I knew she was a national committeewoman, but I was not involved in that in any way.

Back here in San Diego in 1947, I was a member of the Young Democrats. I first became a vice-president and then president of the Young Democrats, in 1947 and '48. We had quite a hassle in the Young Democrats, as political organizations too often do. There was a big factional dispute during the 1948 campaign before the Democratic National Convention.

A bunch of us Young Turks in the Young Democrats at that time didn't want Truman to be renominated. We thought Truman was not liberal enough nor adequate for the job and were anxious to have somebody else nominated. We sent a telegram to the delegates at the convention suggesting that they nominate somebody in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt, somebody like William O. Douglas. I've forgotten the other names on the list, but it didn't include Truman. Douglas was our choice over Truman by four to one. That caused a furor, and the president of the Young Democrats resigned, and I became president.

Then in '48 I ran for the Democratic Central Committee and I was elected. When the Democratic Central Committee was organized I was selected as its chairman. So for a while I was president of the Young Democrats and chairman of the Democratic Central Committee. This was in '48, during the Truman-Barkley campaign. That was my first direct involvement in a political campaign.

Then we had a child who became ill in December of '48 with kidney trouble and whether he would live or not was problematical. He was ill for ten months, and I resigned from all political activity in order to be available at home. My child died on Halloween evening in 1949. So last night being Halloween, it was, as always, a traumatic time in our lives.

Then a couple of months later my father died. By then I really wasn't interested in politics or anything of the sort. The only thing that brought me out of retirement from politics was the Helen Douglas campaign.

- Lindsley: This little article here, [holds up clipping ] entitled "Who's Who in San Diego," tells how only for a short time had I left politics. It tells about my son being ill and dying and my father dying. "It wasn't until last month," the article says, "that Lindsley rejoined the political forces that have played such a part in his life. He took on the local campaign of Helen Gahagan Douglas, the actress-turned-Congresswoman, who also bears the liberal label."
- Glaser: That would be 1950, then?
- Lindsley: Yes, this was in March, 1950.

Chairman, 1950 Campaign, San Diego and Imperial Counties

- Glaser: You were chairman of the San Diego County campaign as well as the city organization, weren't you?
- Lindsley: Yes, the Democratic central committee represents the entire county area. That's the official body of the Democratic party. Each county has a central committee elected by the voters from the various assembly districts, elected by the Democratic registration in the primaries. And that body, then, is the official organ of the Democratic party. We still have central committees. How effective they are is another thing. Technically, they are the official organ of the party. But there are all sorts of separate campaigns of candidates and clubs and so forth that function outside the scope, to one degree or another, of the central committee.
- Glaser: Your chairmanship included Imperial County?
- Lindsley: No, no. San Diego County only. I had nothing to do with Imperial County.
- Glaser: I'm confusing your central committee with the Douglas campaign committee. Mrs. Lustig said that the campaign office for which she was the executive secretary covered both Imperial County and San Diego County.
- Lindsley: That's separate, yes. That's the Helen Douglas campaign committee, but the central committee is strictly San Diego County.

Lindsley: Now, I was out of the central committee when I came back to manage Helen's campaign. I just came back for Helen Douglas's campaign against Nixon. I have in my files the minutes of the first meeting of the committee and these are things that you will want, I'm sure, in your file.

Glaser: So when you did return to politics, you came back at a rather high level as manager of Mrs. Douglas's local campaign.

Lindsley: I had left at a pretty high level--from the chairman of the Democratic Central Committee and president of the Young Democrats at the same time.

Our first meeting of the Helen Douglas committee was on February 9, 1950, in my office. That's when I announced my acceptance of the chairmanship of the committee. George Douglas had come down and talked to me about it. George, I guess, is Melvyn's brother. He had been the front man for Helen to help set up the campaign committee.

Glaser: Was he her campaign manager for Southern California?

Lindsley: He was a coordinator, and I think I have some correspondence in here from him which may say what he was.

Glaser: When did you first meet Mrs. Douglas?

Lindsley: Just a matter of the last part of January or the first part of February of 1950.

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas as Individual and as Campaigner

Glaser: What was your first impression of her?

Lindsley: Oh, of Helen Douglas--oh, I couldn't tell you when I first met her. I met her sometime during the primary, but I don't know when, and I look through here and can't find anything that tells me. I knew of Helen Douglas, as anybody who was exposed to the political scene and particularly who was a political liberal, knew who Helen Douglas was. My first impression was the same as the impression the next day and the next day and the next day and forever thereafter--a wonderful, dynamic person with a beautiful character and a beautiful mind and a will to do something about what she thought about.

Glaser: How do you assess her as a campaigner, as a politician?

Lindsley: I don't know that I've ever seen one better and I have run several campaigns of topnotch people. She was a beautiful campaigner. I can remember driving her around from one place to another during the campaign in my car or riding in other cars with her. I never saw anybody who could keep herself as vital and vibrant in spite of the heavy schedule that she was required to go through. She had the faculty, and I saw her do it many times--let's say we'd have a street corner meeting in Escondido, as we did. She'd get up on the back of the truck that we had and speak to the people in the community that gathered around. Then we'd get in a car and we'd go off to, say, Oceanside or some other place. She had a facility for turning it off and taking a nap between places. She could rest just that quickly, close her eyes and relax and be refreshed by the next stop. She made many stops and was always alert at every one of them. She made a beautiful impression on anybody that ever heard her.

Glaser: Was she as good on a one-to-one basis as with a group?

Lindsley: She was excellent on a one-to-one basis, very, very good. The people that she was talking to would assume she was talking to them. She may not have been, but she certainly gave the impression that she was.

Glaser: I've heard criticism that she didn't know how to terminate; that she talked, in effect, too much.

Lindsley: I couldn't say that was true. It was impossible for it to be true in our scheduling routine, because we had so many places to cover. I don't think she had the inability to terminate. I think she would hesitate to leave a group that still wanted to talk to her, you know, but I don't think that's the same as having an inability to terminate. I never found that to be true. I do not remember that to be true, and I think I would because I probably drove her around more than anybody else.

Glaser: Was she a well-organized person?

Lindsley: She was a very well-organized person.

Glaser: Could she motivate people?

Lindsley: She motivated people beautifully. There were only two people that I know of in my political life who motivated people and held on to their affection and interest over the years without it waning at all--Helen Douglas was one and Adlai Stevenson was the other. Those who worked for and who admired Adlai Stevenson continued to. Now the admiration for Adlai Stevenson was not quite as personal as it was with Helen Douglas, in the sense that people who knew Helen Douglas were more personally involved and affected



- Lindsley: by her than with Adlai Stevenson, who was more reserved. But he certainly stimulated your admiration for his fine mind and the manner in which he expressed what he had on his mind.
- Glaser: How would the aspect of her being a woman come into this? Could men take criticism from her? If your committee made a suggestion and she turned it down, was this taken as a put down by the men because it came from a woman?
- Lindsley: I don't believe so. I have no recollection of anything of that sort. That doesn't seem to fit Helen Douglas's personality as I saw it.
- Glaser: You were obviously a very devoted worker. Was everybody on that committee--
- Lindsley: Everybody, everybody. You talked to Helen Lustig. Do you know of anybody that felt more devoted than Helen Lustig?
- Glaser: No, but she made the suggestion that there were men who came in after the primary who were in to ride on Mrs. Douglas's coattails.
- Lindsley: Now that's a different thing. There were those that came in after the primary. But I don't think you can talk about it as a man-woman, Helen Douglas-somebody else, problem. Those were the kinds of people who were not for Helen Douglas to begin with, but she was now their candidate.
- There are political purists to whom party is everything (I wasn't one of those), and so they would support Helen Douglas even though ideologically they may not have agreed with her. There were many who didn't, and people of that sort perhaps, but I don't remember many of those who were active directly in her campaign. They were over here in the central committee and the official organs of the party, which didn't do that much anyway.
- Glaser: How did the rank and file, more especially the women, react to her? She was an exceptionally-endowed woman, with intelligence and beauty. Did this win women over, or were they envious of her and therefore negative?
- Lindsley: I don't remember--maybe I was blind--I don't remember envy. I do remember the typical chauvinism (we'd now call it) on the part of men who couldn't quite comprehend somebody that attractive also being that competent, that aware, and being able to be as effective in the political field as she was. There were men, and I guess women like that, too. But I couldn't say that that was anything significant or that stood out. I can't put my finger on any of it or say that it was a general situation at all.

### Campaign Finances

- Glaser: I'd like to ask you about the finances for the primary as well as for the general campaigns. You didn't have too much money, I understand, and normally you'd expect to get some money from the Beverly Hills people.
- Lindsley: Well, I can't remember too much about the finances, but I do have the candidate's campaign statement that we had to file in November of 1950 after the general election. It tells who contributed, how much they contributed, and the total amount that was contributed. This was signed by me, and some of the handwriting on here is Helen Lustig's, so she's the one that took part in its preparation. We apparently collected [reading] \$8557.18 in the general election, and we expended \$8516.57. We had approximately \$41 left over. I'll make a copy of this for you.
- Glaser: And you used the \$40 for Mr. [Lionel] Van Deerlin's campaign?
- Lindsley: We used the \$40--I have some of the correspondence on that. I wrote to Helen and asked her if she thought it was all right, and I got a letter back from Helen saying, "Whatever you say, fine." So that was used for Mr. Van Deerlin two years later in his campaign for Congress. He was defeated then but was elected later and has been in Congress for many years.
- Glaser: I want to go into the primary campaign with you. Senator [Sheridan] Downey was going to retire and then he was not. It seemed it could go either way. Do you know why he retired?
- Lindsley: I knew why, but I don't know why. In other words, I can't remember now. I suppose if I were to go through my files and read all the correspondence and the minutes of the meetings, there might be some discussion of it.

### Primary Campaign

Role of Senator Sheridan Downey, Manchester Boddy, and Clinton McKinnon

- Lindsley: Do you know when it was, from the information you have, that Downey finally did pull out of the primary and Manchester Boddy came in?

Glaser: I don't have the actual date. I think it was sometime in the spring. I know it was quite a surprise that Boddy entered the picture when Mrs. Douglas had the field to herself. And there's the question of why Boddy came into the picture.

Lindsley: Not much question to any of us who were in there. It was the conservative political brokers who didn't want Helen Douglas to be the party's nominee. One, she was too liberal for many of them. Two, she wasn't somebody that they could control, and the people that were surrounding Helen Douglas were, by and large, perhaps too liberal for most of them.

Glaser: You're saying then that the Democratic power brokers--

Lindsley: Yes, Democratic power brokers, although I wouldn't be surprised but that there was help from the other side.

Glaser: Well, there is knowledge that Boddy had been taking Hearst money as a yearly option. I think it was about a quarter of a million dollars for five or six years.

Lindsley: To keep his paper going, you mean?

Glaser: Yes. Also he had hefty loans from an oil company.

Lindsley: Well, none of us trusted what happened with Downey going out and Boddy coming in. I don't remember now what I undoubtedly knew at the time about it. I haven't given any thought to it all these years, except that I've never felt kindly about Manchester Boddy.

Glaser: There was also the statement that Nixon preferred to run against Mrs. Douglas rather than Senator Downey because he felt that she would be easier to beat.

Lindsley: Well, that could easily be true, because he, being what he was and running the kind of campaign that he would be likely to run and knowing what he would do (just like he did against Voorhis), he knew that's what he would do against Helen Douglas. And he knew what he was doing in Watergate before it happened. I don't have and never have had any respect for the man.

I told this to somebody about two years ago, when I ran into one of the old campaign workers in the Helen Douglas campaign. She introduced me to her husband, and told him that she had met me in the Douglas campaign. I said, yes, that's when I learned about Watergate, in 1950, in the Helen Douglas campaign. So I'm sure that that's the case, and I probably suspected it at the time.

- Glaser: I have a statement here from a London Observer interview with Nixon in 1968, in which Nixon says it was only natural that he should have made communism an issue since Boddy's campaign accused her of every red affiliation short of being a communist. In other words, Nixon felt this was his justification.
- Lindsley: He didn't need any justification of that sort to do what he was going to do anyway. Boddy was just stealing the march on Nixon. Nixon always has a ready answer for explaining why he did things. I don't remember that statement. That was made in '68. I had quit listening to Nixon by then.
- Glaser: In the Douglas campaign during the primary, how did you handle Boddy's red-baiting?
- Lindsley: We conducted our own campaign. We tried, by and large, to conduct a campaign for Helen Douglas, not a campaign against Boddy. The only way to handle that kind of a campaign is not to wallow in it. So I don't think we did much in the way of anti-Boddy campaigning. It was a positive campaign, pro-Helen Douglas.
- I don't remember the vote, but I think she won pretty handily. I can't tell you what the vote was here. I probably have what the vote was in San Diego someplace. Perhaps you can get it from Ruth Lybeck. You ought to have a lot of stuff from Ruth Lybeck in your files. She was assistant state coordinator, the person in Helen's campaign with whom we dealt. Ruth was in Los Angeles at the Alexandria Hotel; that's where the Southern California headquarters were.\*
- Glaser: I want to ask you about Clinton McKinnon.  
[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]
- Lindsley: I've just run across a letter [looking through his files], a May 23rd, 1950, letter to me from Helen Lustig in which she discusses Senator Downey's talk of the night before and the three major accusations against Mrs. Douglas that Senator Downey made. She's got them in this letter here.

One, Mrs. Douglas's vote with Marcantonio; this ended up as Mr. Nixon's pink sheet. But as Helen Lustig says in her letter to me, "This is stuff we should make available to our speakers; that time and again Republicans voted with Marcantonio on such

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\* Judge Lindsley later added: "In checking my file I found that Helen got 52.9% of the Democratic vote, Boddy got 16.3%, and Nixon got 20.8% in San Diego."

Lindsley: measures as the Marshall Plan, the defeat of UNRA, and the military aid program to Korea, and so forth."

Two, Mrs. Douglas's absenteeism (and she points out that there isn't a member of the Congress who doesn't come home to campaign.) But this is one of the things that Downey was saying--that she was absent a lot. As Helen says, "Weren't Mr. Nixon and Mr. McKinnon out campaigning?" Until she decided to run for the Senate, Helen Douglas had the lowest absentee record of any member of Congress.

Three, her vote on aid to Turkey and Greece.

And then she wrote, "We have some interesting quotes from Manchester Boddy's editorials from his paper." Those probably got thrown out with Helen Lustig's notes.

Okay, but I don't find anything. Then we go back to--you were asking about Clinton McKinnon. Clinton McKinnon was in Congress; he was the congressman from this district. He was a newspaperman and he later became the owner, or major owner, of the Daily News, which he got from Manchester Boddy. He was in Manchester Boddy's corner during the primary. He wasn't supporting Helen Douglas. But I don't remember any particulars about it, just generally that Clinton McKinnon, in the primary, was not that friendly.

Glaser: Mrs. Lustig told me something that I hadn't been aware of, that his was one of the few liberal newspapers around, one of the few newspapers for Mrs. Douglas. Then he sold it before the election, which meant that she lost that support.

Lindsley: It was a little while before the election that he sold it, and it was sold to the San Diego Union-Tribune; it was merged with the Evening Tribune. No, he didn't sell it to them, he sold it to a Mr. John Kennedy and Kennedy later sold to the Evening Tribune some few years later. I'm confused as to time, and I don't know when McKinnon did sell to Kennedy and when Kennedy sold to the Tribune.

It must have already been sold in '50 because there were three reporters with the Journal who organized a little news magazine called Point. They were Lionel Van Deerlin, who later became a congressman Sid Fleishman, who became an author and screenwriter in Hollywood, and Jack Olson, who later became a senior editor of Sports Illustrated and an author. If I went back in my records, I probably could find when that was because I was their attorney. But Point had organized during the Helen Douglas campaign, because there's something in some of our

- Lindsley: minutes about Van Deerlin meeting with the committee and discussing Point and what it might do in the campaign.
- Glaser: Mrs. Lustig's feeling was that Mr. McKinnon could have held off the sale a little bit longer and continued to support Mrs. Douglas during the campaign. She felt it was like a stab in the back.
- Lindsley: It would be pure speculation. I don't remember now about the details on that. There may have been politics, but it was also a good economic deal for McKinnon.

### General Election Campaign

#### Issues and Red-Baiting

- Glaser: What were the issues in San Diego for the general election campaign? What was the involvement with land reclamation and with off shore oil lands?
- Lindsley: Well, not too much in that area. I can't remember now what the major issues were. This was some of Helen's campaign literature. [Holds up material] One particular local issue for California was the Central Valley Project. Helen opposed proposed cuts in the appropriation for reclamation and public power. Downey was waffling and it appeared he had been gotten to and had taken a full turn. Nixon opposed the projects. That was a big local issue. I don't remember that we were campaigning on any other particular local issues.

We were campaigning on Helen's record she'd been a member of Congress for three terms, and she'd been on the Foreign Affairs Committee and a delegate to the United Nations. She had been active in attempting to secure international control of atomic energy, for strengthening the United Nations, liberalization of the Displaced Persons Bureau, and the Marshall Plan. She was fighting for higher minimum wages, adequate rent and price controls, and better housing--both low rent and middle income generally. This was the substance of Helen's campaign, and I don't remember that we got into any special local issues.

Of course, before it was over, we were placed in--or they attempted to place her in--a defensive posture because of her voting record, claiming she was a communist sympathizer.

- Glaser: Your Imperial Valley would be very concerned with the Central Valley Water issue and the reclamation provisions.

- Lindsley: Yes, but we were concerned here too. I remember that it was involved as an important issue. As a matter of fact, I think this was one of the big issues that would have--may have--been an albatross around Downey's neck. I think Downey had shifted position from where he had once been as a liberal Democrat to where now he was speaking in terms more sympathetic to the larger landholders. That was involved in the campaign when we thought it would be Downey and was also an issue with Nixon who, as one might expect, was lined up with the large landholders.
- Glaser: When, in the campaign, did you become aware that Nixon was going to use the red-baiting tactics that he did?
- Lindsley: Well, I suppose everybody who knew about Jerry Voorhis' campaign would suspect that it would happen any time, and I can't say when. I'm sure we suspected that this would be used, not in the manner and to the extent that it was, to the extent that nothing else was an issue from Nixon's vantage point as her opponent. Nothing else was an issue to him. He didn't get involved in anything else except that this woman was a red; you couldn't take a chance. So that was the whole issue. I don't know when it started, except, as far as I'm concerned, that was his campaign from beginning to end.
- Glaser: Were you able to counter this in any way?
- Lindsley: I think Helen's theory was, "Don't glorify it by talking about it so much." We should continue to talk (and this was our position too) positively about the things that were strong in her record, the things that were really important; not the red scare, which was a red herring, but the things that were truly important in her campaign, some of the things I just mentioned a while ago.
- Among the things that she was making much about were the problems the consumer was having with high prices, inflation, et cetera. The back of that [holds up campaign flyer] shows Helen going on to the floor of the Congress carrying the market basket. And the famous "Cost of Living" speech; that was a big issue in the campaign. She was fighting for consumers. We didn't use the terms then as we do now--she was fighting for the housewife.
- Glaser: Did the Blue Book that she compiled help in combatting Nixon's red-baiting?\*

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\* "Helen Gahagan Douglas vs Richard Nixon; Here is FULL Record of Their Votes in Congress"

Lindsley: I don't remember the Blue Book, and I don't have it now.

Glaser: There was a statement in the New Republic that too often she was talking to those who were already for her and she couldn't reach those who were on the other side. Do you agree with that?

Lindsley: Well, we didn't run that kind of a campaign here. We didn't go to meetings, for instance, which were meetings of Helen Douglas's supporters. We'd set up a community meeting and hold it on a street corner. Now you didn't pick your audience when you did that. You took whatever the community had.

Glaser: Yes, but were those who came to the meetings those who were already convinced?

Lindsley: I don't think that's necessarily true. I remember one night we hit several places--I'll never forget this night either--one of them was the Business and Professional Women's Club. We met out at Rose Hedge Manor in La Mesa. It was a cross section of business and professional women of San Diego. Now, maybe she was speaking to women and therefore you'd say she was speaking to a group that would be friendly to her, but not necessarily. Women have never been that cohesive in the political sense. So there were a lot of people at that meeting who were not for Helen, or who were not in her party in any event, but who were impressed by her; there's no question about it.

The reason I remember that is we went from there--I think the next meeting was a meeting with a labor union.\* And if you think labor unions are automatically for liberal Democrats, you're mistaken, and anybody who thinks that or who thought that then was mistaken. I was a liberal Democrat and I was an anathema to a lot of them in the labor movement because I was too liberal for them. They were not that liberal. So when she's speaking to them she's speaking to a lot of people who were frightened by the red scare, who needed to be talked to by Helen, although you'd think they would be in her camp.

Between the Business and Professional Women's meeting and the next meeting, Helen borrowed my handkerchief to take her lipstick off and reapply her makeup to prepare for her next stop. That handkerchief ended up in my glove compartment and sometime later my wife found it in there. [Laughter] To this day I'm not sure my wife believes that was Helen Douglas's lipstick on that handkerchief. But it was. [Chuckling] I remember that event very well.

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\*Judge Lindsley later stated that the meeting referred to was that of the Tolteca Association, a Spanish-American group. The labor union meeting was the next day.



## Nixon Support from Women, Catholic Hierarchy

- Glaser: About your statement of not being so sure that women were for her just because they were women, I came across an indication that you're quite right. Kathleen Norris was against her and a woman from Los Angeles, Catherine Connors Goetz who had been a three-time Democratic National Committeewoman from Kentucky. They were very strongly opposed to her. Also, Nixon had a "flying squadron" of women supporters in Los Angeles, and I wondered if he had a similar organization in this area?
- Lindsley: I don't remember about it if he did. Did you ask Helen Lustig about that?
- Glaser: Yes, she was not aware of any such organization.
- Lindsley: No, I don't remember it.
- Glaser: I want to ask you about Catholic opposition. The church hierarchy in Los Angeles came out strongly against Helen Gahagan Douglas. Was that also true here in San Diego?
- Lindsley: I don't remember about that either. I don't know whether there's anything in any of the material I have that deals with that. [Looks through his papers].
- Glaser: What about black opposition? There was a paper in Los Angeles, The Sentinel, that came out pro-Nixon. And yet Mary McLeod Bethune came out and spoke in a black church for--
- Lindsley: Oh yes, Mary McLeod Bethune came out here, during the campaign, I remember that now.

I don't remember any black opposition of any significance in San Diego, and we did have black people on her campaign committee. I remember Mrs. Bebe Banks particularly. She was one of the main members of her committee. Mrs. Banks was very active in the black community, and I was very active in the black community. At that time I was an officer, I think vice-president, of the NAACP. I think I would have remembered any significant black opposition to Helen Douglas, and I don't remember any.

There were some who in the primary were supporting Boddy. I can remember one black lady who was sort of a token for the white Democratic establishment, so to speak. She was one of the first black women to go to the national convention. I think she was in Boddy's campaign during the primary, but not for Nixon. She was all for Helen afterwards.

## Smear Techniques and Attempts to Counteract

Glaser: There was a statement in an article that appeared in The Southern California Quarterly this year: "It was not red-baiting per se which defeated Mrs. Douglas so much as it was the ineffective strategy used to counter Nixon's unscrupulous demagoguery."\*

Lindsley: Well, that is a ridiculous statement because there's no way you can develop effective strategy to overcome that kind of demagoguery. It went on through that campaign, it went on before that, it went on in the presidential campaign when he was running with Eisenhower, it went on all the time he was in the United States Senate. It went on and it was overcome when he ran against Kennedy, but not for that reason. Kennedy was too attractive a personality, but he only barely beat him. And Nixon continued it --he came back again in '68. He's been a demagogue all his life with great success politically and economically.

I can remember talking about this with Helen while going from meeting to meeting. There's no way you can deal with that because you let yourself get mired down in denials of what he's saying, so that you magnify the very thing that he's saying by denying it. There's no way you can overcome demagoguery of the Nixon variety because people tend to be frightened by it and fall prey to it. And they're doing it right now in this campaign, in this election year [1976]. The people are going to succumb to demagoguery from clever demagogues.

Glaser: So you were all buffaloed and were unable to really--

Lindsley: We weren't buffaloed. We conducted, I think, the only kind of campaign you can conduct, and that is not to be drawn into it. We didn't succeed, but you couldn't have succeeded by spending your time denying it either. At least you might have made a point.

Glaser: But if you don't win, then obviously the message has not gotten across to the rank and file voters.

Lindsley: The message didn't get across, that's right, but the electorate can be frightened more easily than it can be comforted. It'll buy fear more quickly than it'll buy intelligence, really. That's why people like Nixon could succeed. That's why people like McCarthy could succeed.

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\* Ingrid Winther Scobie, "Helen Gahagan Douglas and Her 1950 Senate Race with Richard Nixon", Southern California Quarterly, Spring 1976, pp. 113-123.

Lindsley: Look at the people who succumbed to McCarthy. You knew from the beginning that he was a blustering idiot who was going around the country lying through his teeth. The pure demagogue, and people were frightened by him and they succumbed to it--pure fright. Fear is one of the worst things there is to overcome, and you can't.

My favorite quote, there it is right up there, [pointing to the wall] Goethe: "There is nothing more frightful than ignorance in action." And that's what happens when you have people like Nixon and McCarthy--ignorance in action and stimulating fear in others who respond to it. They're afraid to disbelieve it. Or they're afraid of what may happen to them if they speak out.

Glaser: Well, not even Jack Kennedy was willing to disavow McCarthy.

Lindsley: Jack Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy--what the heck, he was actually working for them, that's right.

Glaser: He was a counsel.

Lindsley: That's why I never really warmed up to the Kennedys. I never, never warmed up to the Kennedys. Of course, it was loyalty, in a sense, to Stevenson; it was pretty hard for me to compare anybody to Stevenson as a presidential candidate.

Glaser: Did Nixon ever answer Mrs. Douglas's charge that he voted against military aid to Korea before the war broke out?

Lindsley: I don't know now. I don't remember.

Glaser: Of the various techniques that we've heard of on the part of Nixon, one was a telephone campaign at the very last minute--perhaps the evening prior to the election. About 500,000 phone calls were made in the Los Angeles and San Diego areas charging Mrs. Douglas with being a communist. Were you aware of this?

Lindsley: Yes.

Glaser: Did friends of yours or your family receive this kind of a call?

Lindsley: No, nobody that I knew received it, but we knew that it happened. Not as much here perhaps as other areas. And we knew that it was going to happen. Now that's nothing you could stop.

Glaser: You knew ahead of time?

Lindsley: We knew it was going to happen because some of us knew what happened with Jerry Voorhis. That's where he started the technique. That was the thing that was so frustrating. Here was

- Lindsley: Jerry Voorhis, a popular congressman who should have won hands down, and at the last minute the phone calls saying that he was a communist, he was a fellow traveler. No way you could answer it, no way you could respond to it. And it happens at the last minute so there's no way you could overcome it. The people are frightened, and that's what defeated Jerry Voorhis--the last minute telephone smear.
- Glaser: I didn't realize that had taken place. I thought this was something that Chotiner had introduced for the 1950 campaign.
- Lindsley: Well Chotiner, I think, had something to do with the Jerry Voorhis campaign. He did not introduce it in the Helen Douglas campaign. That antedated Helen's campaign; that came first in the Jerry Voorhis campaign.
- Glaser: Well, Chotiner made a statement, when he held a workshop to educate Republicans on how to win campaigns, that Mrs. Douglas made the mistake of attacking Nixon's strength instead of attacking his weaknesses.
- Lindsley: What strength was that?
- Glaser: Well, I assume the strength in campaigning.
- Lindsley: I don't know. We can't measure him as a campaigner that you'd know how to attack. Somebody that's unprincipled, you can't predict precisely what unprincipled thing they're going to do. If it's somebody that's campaigning on issues, then you can anticipate, then you can be prepared to answer it. You know: well, this is his philosophical makeup and this is what he's likely to say and we can respond to that.
- But if truth means nothing, if principle means nothing, that means he can do anything. He can lie, he can cook up all sorts of things, and there's no way you know in advance what it's going to be, so you can't prepare for it. And since it's not true, you can't respond to it because you can't deny a lie and make it sound like you're telling the truth yourself.
- Glaser: Does the name Bill Malone mean anything to you? He was in Northern California.
- Lindsley: Well, yes, but I can't place where it is now. The name's familiar.
- Glaser: He had something to do with controlling campaign funds.
- Lindsley: For whom?

- Glaser: For all the Democratic candidates. I wondered to what extent you might have gotten money--
- Lindsley: Any correspondence we had about money went up to the committee in Los Angeles.
- Glaser: Were you placed in the position of having to explain to people that yes, Mrs. Douglas was a Democrat, to people who might have been confused because there was a pamphlet that came out, "Is Helen Douglas a Democrat? Her Record Says No"?
- Lindsley: Oh, I remember that vaguely, but I don't remember any details about it. I couldn't tell you how I reacted to it because I don't remember it that well.
- Glaser: There was another Chotiner pamphlet, "One Democrat to Another." Was that an effective campaign tool on Nixon's behalf?
- Lindsley: Well, their whole campaign was effective, unfortunately. I know some people in San Diego who participated as Democrats for Nixon, for instance. They had that kind of campaign going on then. One of them was, I remember, an attorney who later became a superior court judge. He was a Democrat and was very high in the Catholic hierarchy, so that may--
- Glaser: What was his name?
- Lindsley: William Mahedy. I remember that because I had officed with him. My first law office was with Martin & Mahedy when I started practicing law in San Diego. I wasn't with them during the Helen Douglas campaign; I'd moved into another office by that time. But I remember that he was active in the Democrats for Nixon. Now, he was a Democrat. That firm was legal counsel for the diocese here in San Diego, and when they took a stand it had some significance in the Catholic Church.
- Glaser: Did that sort of thing hurt a lot?
- Lindsley: Oh, those things always hurt, sure. Whenever you can convince people that this person is really not a good member of your party, and if you're a party person, it can hurt, sure.

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas's Relationships with Other Politicians

- Glaser: Something else that perhaps weakened the campaign was that Mrs. Douglas was not wholeheartedly for Jimmy Roosevelt, was she?

Lindsley: I don't think she was.

Glaser: The party is supposed to have a united front--

Lindsley: There was friction. We had problems in our campaign with friction between the Roosevelt campaign and the Douglas campaign. We would try to schedule things together; we did have some problems. There wasn't that much warmth, I agree. I remember that.

Glaser: Wasn't it a little stronger than that? Wasn't it that she really preferred Warren?

Lindsley: I don't know. I never talked to Helen about it, so I don't know. In retrospect, so would I, you know. But I was loyal to the ticket, so I was for Jimmy Roosevelt, and I really didn't know Warren that much then.

[end tape 1, side B; begin tape 2, side A]

I would say that Warren turned out to be something different than I thought he was when he was attorney general and governor of this state. I'm not the only one who was surprised; Eisenhower was terribly surprised at what Warren turned out to be. Warren turned out to be one of my heroes of all time.

Glaser: Why do you imagine that President Eisenhower appointed him to the court?

Lindsley: It was probably a political pay-off, I don't know, because Warren was potential presidential opposition for Eisenhower. Warren had been on the ticket with Dewey earlier, and he was somebody that might have gone back to the convention with some clout. I think Warren helped swing a bloc of votes from Taft to Eisenhower that caused Eisenhower's nomination, and as reward, I suppose, that was what he got. Eisenhower didn't know what he was getting.

Glaser: I've heard that Mrs. Douglas was almost more in favor of Eisenhower for president than Truman. Did you know anything about that?

Lindsley: No, I don't know that about Mrs. Douglas, but I know that a lot of people thought Eisenhower was a lot more liberal than he really was. That incident in the Young Democrats I was mentioning, in which we sent a telegram off to the convention suggesting the election of somebody else in the tradition of Roosevelt, I think one of the names on the telegram was Eisenhower. So there was a lot of liberal support for Eisenhower in the 1948 campaign. A lot of liberals were trying to get Eisenhower to run as a Democrat in 1948. If I can find this news article, [looking through files] here we are. It says, "John Dail resigned in

Lindsley: bitter protest as president--" because of a meeting in which we were attempting to give Truman the political heave-ho. The meeting was held at my house, [chuckling] so I was the butt of the attack. It was presided over by me as second vice-president. "He (John Dail) says, '...reveals that there are many left who are attempting to wreck the Democratic party, whether the action resulting from that meeting was directed by enemies of the Democratic cause or the result of political immaturity is not for me to decide.'" This is John Dail, the president.

Here's what we did: "The May 11th meeting proposed that Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas; General Dwight D. Eisenhower, now president of Columbia University; Ellis Arnold, former governor of Georgia; and James Roosevelt, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, be the panel from which the presidential and vice-presidential selections be made by the Democrats." We sent the telegram off, or we adopted that resolution (it wasn't a telegram), and that really caused a furor, oh boy. So, I'm not surprised that Helen may have felt that way. I'm interested in knowing that because that's the way we felt in '48. We were earlier.

Glaser: I understand that she was not much in favor of Mr. Truman.

Lindsley: I wasn't. I had been in Washington at the time, as she was. I was with the Library of Congress and knew the government. I was active as personnel director of the Library of Congress, I was on the Council of Personnel Administration, which was the council of all the personnel directors of all the federal agencies, and I was the Employee Relations Committee chairman of the Council. We were in the process of working out an employee relations program for the whole federal government, and we met in the White House with Truman's representative. I've forgotten who it was--the man later became the director of Internal Revenue.

You could just see people like MacLeish and all these intellectuals moving out of the government and the political hacks moving in; the political hacks came from all over. Truman was a great admirer of his friends and he brought them in. I'm sure that this was the kind of thing that Helen Douglas also observed. Truman didn't stimulate many of us. And some of us never forgave him for dropping the bombs.

#### Campaign Advisors and Workers

Glaser: Who did Mrs. Douglas lean on for advice in this area or within the whole state?

Lindsley: Well, within the whole state, I don't know. In this area, I suppose it was not any one person, but I suppose it was the committee that was set up. And the principal people on that committee were Helen Lustig, myself, Grace Ritoff, Blessing Muehling, and Armistead Carter.

I don't think she leaned on anybody in this community for advice, frankly. I can't say she leaned on me, and I don't think she leaned on Helen Lustig. Here she just leaned on us generally to run the campaign as we saw best. Throughout the state--I don't know. Whenever we needed anything, we looked to Ruth Lybeck in Los Angeles.

Glaser: Who was Harold Tipton?

Lindsley: Doesn't ring any bells to me.

Glaser: Did she have a Southern California campaign manager?

Lindsley: Well, I got a copy of the letterhead here and it gives the names of the--[looking through his papers] Ruth Lybeck was the assistant state coordinator. Let me see if I can find the early correspondence, it has some of the names on it.

I don't know who she relied upon. No way I can answer that question. Here's somebody who was a friend of hers and was vice-chairman of the women's division of the Democratic State Central Committee, Leisa Bronson. Leisa played some role in the Douglas campaign; I don't know precisely what. But she was at that time vice-chairman of the women's division of the state central committee.

I knew Leisa Bronson back in Washington because she worked at the Library of Congress while I was its director of personnel. I was surprised when I got out here and got active in the campaign and found out that she was working in Helen's campaign.

Glaser: Does the name Susie Clifton ring a bell?

Lindsley: That name is familiar. [Looking through papers] All I can say is yes, I remember that name, but I can't remember any more than that. She was active in the Democratic party.

Glaser: Did Mrs. Douglas's husband play a role in her campaign?

Lindsley: Not very much, not in this area at any event. I can't say what role he played elsewhere in the state. He never came down here. Melvyn never campaigned in this area. I have never met Melvyn Douglas in all the time I've known Helen. And if he'd been in town working on the campaign, I would have known about it.



- Lindsley: Here are the names on her letterhead. This is apparently her committee for the whole state because it gives both the San Francisco and the Los Angeles addresses. [Reading] "Sponsors Committee Co-Chairmen." North was Dr. Monroe Deutsch and South was Thomas Ford and Irene Heineman. State coordinator was Harold Tipton, and the assistant state coordinator was Ruth Lybeck. I did all my dealing with Ruth Lybeck out of Los Angeles. The women's division in the South: Lillian Ford, chairman, and Glad Hall Jones, vice-chairman. Treasurer, Alvin P. Myers in Los Angeles. Anyway, you'll have a photocopy of this stuff.
- Glaser: Some big guns came out from Washington to speak on behalf of Mrs. Douglas. I wondered how helpful they were or did they betray her weakness that she was in need of this kind of support. There were people like Averell Harriman, Alben Barkley, Eleanor Roosevelt, Maurice Tobin, Howard McGrath.
- Lindsley: I don't think that would be looked upon as a betrayal of her weakness. I don't remember any of them coming to San Diego. I wouldn't react to it that way; that wouldn't be my evaluation of their coming out. It's part of the political process and it happens all the time that the big guns come out, like they're coming out now and traveling all around. Like Jerry Brown is making sure that he's seen with Jimmy Carter. And wherever you go, the big names come out. No, I don't think that's a problem. If somebody analyzed it that way, that's their analysis, not mine.
- Glaser: Your mention of Brown reminds me of something I wanted to ask you: I hadn't been aware until Mrs. Lustig told me that Pat Brown was a big disappointment in that he did not come out strongly for Mrs. Douglas. He was so intent on his own career that he gave the impression that she could possibly be a liability. Is that overstating it?
- Lindsley: Probably not. Pat Brown said things when he made speeches and he said things when he was in office that seemed to often belie the people he kept around him and those he "slept with" in the political bed. In other words, he sounded much more liberal and idealistic than the kind of people from whom he took advice when he ran his campaigns.

Those of us who were on the more liberal side were not actively brought in to his campaigns in the local area--I don't know about the rest of the state. I was active in his campaigns, but only in a sort of a peripheral way because in this community you couldn't have left me out. I was too much of a political name to be left out. But I was never that active in Pat Brown's campaigns, in the sense that I was never asked to be that active.

- Lindsley: I think that's true of others like Helen Lustig and many of the others--those of us who were probably more liberal than the rank and file of the political leaders could tolerate.
- Glaser: Did you have a feeling that he was possibly sabotaging Mrs. Douglas's campaign?
- Lindsley: I can't say that I had that feeling, no. You're always sabotaging when you give too little too late. I suppose the only political way you could sabotage is do much less than you ought to.
- Glaser: I think that's the sense of what Mrs. Lustig said to me. She felt that perhaps sabotage was too strong a word and modified her statement. But it was obvious that she had wanted more support.
- Lindsley: Yes, that's right. She should have had more support than she got from the usual Democratic establishment. We had reluctant support from labor, which, in this community, had lined up behind Manchester Boddy. We had reluctant support from them after the primary. We got some support from most of them; they couldn't really, on the face of it, turn anywhere else. But it was sort of tongue-in-cheek, by and large.
- Glaser: Does the name George Luckey mean anything?
- Lindsley: Yes, it does, not so much in this campaign but earlier.
- Glaser: I gather that there was a possibility that he might have run for governor instead of Jimmy Roosevelt in 1950.
- Lindsley: I think Luckey was considering it. I don't remember what happened. I remember Luckey from the 1948 campaign, the Truman-Barkley campaign. He was a Truman-Barkley coordinator of Southern California, in any event. I just happened to see something here in one of my files with a picture of George Luckey in it.
- Glaser: You're an archivist's dream with all your files.
- Lindsley: One thing I can't find and I'm sorry--I made a talk that was published in the little Democrat about Helen Douglas. What did I call it? I can't remember. Anyway, I'm trying to find that because that ought to be in the hopper, but I can't find it.
- Yes, I probably am an archivist's dream, but I keep saying, "These, I'm going to use someday." That's why I've decided I can't let the originals out of my possession.
- Glaser: I wanted to ask you about some Republican names. I'm sure this is going to raise your temperature a little bit.

Lindsley: Oh no, I don't--

Glaser: Arnholt Smith and his brother Jack? Arbuthnot?

Lindsley: Arbuthnot doesn't mean a thing to me. C. Arnholt Smith does, but the other name doesn't mean a thing to me. I got along okay with Republicans.

Glaser: The Smiths were heavy backers of Nixon, were they not?

Lindsley: Oh yes, you bet. We didn't know that much about C. Arnholt Smith back then, however. He was more in the background. He didn't make his splash in the community until later.

#### Campaign Conduct in Hindsight

Glaser: I wanted to ask you (you know hindsight is always helpful) if you had to do it over, in what way would you handle the campaign differently?

Lindsley: You see, there's no way you can know that, because if I did it over now, I'm a totally different person than I was then. I have a lot of years behind me, I've been involved in other campaigns, I've chaired other campaigns. I was Stanley Mosk's campaign chairman here when he ran for attorney general. He was the only Democratic candidate that carried San Diego County in that campaign. That was in 1958, when Brown was elected governor and Glenn Anderson was elected lieutenant governor and Alan Cranston was elected state controller and Clair Engle was elected Senator.

That was the big year for the Democrats in California because that was the first state-wide election after cross-filing had been eliminated. And the whole ticket went in state-wide, except for Secretary of State Jordan, an old-line family that had a sort of a corner on the Secretary of State's office from the turn of the century, I guess; Jordan was reelected. And in that campaign, of all those, the only one that carried San Diego County was Stanley Mosk.

I don't know what I would do different except perhaps now you wouldn't have to deal with Nixon the same way. He's different too, now. People would be a little more accepting of Helen Douglas as a woman candidate. Let's face it: that was a negative factor. She lost more votes than she gained by being a woman. I said earlier that I couldn't put my finger on any direct prob-

Lindsley: lems that we had in the campaign because of that amongst women. But the whole culture was different then, and it was not as accepting of a woman. It was difficult for them to accept that a woman could be a strong leader (as strong intellectually as she was) and someone who could do the things that she had proved she could do. They would accept that more now and so you could deal better with that. You could probably get more support from women now than you could then.

You wouldn't have to worry so much now about the red-baiting. But if we hadn't gone through the McCarthy era and the Nixon era, if we were starting out scratch again and it was again right after the war, I don't know that we'd be able to handle it any differently. You can't say what would you do differently. I don't think I'd do anything differently. I think we ran a good campaign locally by just going our way. We won handily in the primary in this district, which was something because Boddy was more of a conservative, and this is a conservative community.

Glaser: And not even having more money would have helped you?

Lindsley: Oh sure, more money would help, but I don't know whether we could have organized ourselves to get more money than we did; perhaps. I don't think lack of money defeated us. Fear defeated us, fear. And the more we would have said about it, the more likely it would have been that we'd have magnified the fear.

The more Jimmy Carter talks, the more apprehensive people get about him. If he had gone quietly through this campaign, he'd be elected in a landslide. But he's tried to respond to the things that they said against him; made a few gaffes himself. And it hasn't helped, because people are afraid of change. They're afraid of that which they don't know.

Glaser: Are you willing to make a prediction this election eve?

Lindsley: Well, the way things are going, the trend of things--it's pretty hard to predict with somebody this new. I don't know how you can. If the poll trends are really what they seem to be, I don't see how it's going to stop when it gets fifty-fifty then turn around and go back the other way. So I'm apprehensive.

If Carter wins it's going to be because he does very well in the South. He's going to have to do very well in the South. The South may carry him through, if the South realizes that they ought to go solidly for Carter. Because if they don't do it now, it's going to be a long time before another southerner can come down the pike and get nominated.

Cold War Demagoguery: Harry S. Truman, Richard M. Nixon and Joseph McCarthy

Glaser: Well, this raises a philosophical question, to go back to '50 and Nixon: Did the time (the era) make Nixon or did Nixon make the time?

Lindsley: That's a good question. The time, of course, helped make Nixon because we were fearful of the Russians right after the war. The time was ripe for an unprincipled demagogue to step in, and one did. That was Nixon. If he hadn't, there probably was another one waiting in the wings. I don't know; it's hard to conceive of another one like him, but another one may have been there. I don't think it would have been as bad. If there were others like him, I think we would have seen some others some place else in the country.

Glaser: Well, we did later on with McCarthy.

Lindsley: Well, yes, McCarthy came later. Yes he did. But there weren't that many. There were a lot of them that fell in line with McCarthy and with Nixon, but you're hard put to name others that spearheaded it the way they did.

Glaser: Now, I have another question to ask you; this is speculation. To what degree did Mr. Truman create these times? According to author Howard Fast, his was the very first demand for loyalty oaths.

Lindsley: He had a tremendous affect on creating the times by the cold war approach, which was his baby. This was one of the reasons those of us in the Young Democrats at that time wanted to get rid of him. We felt the climate he was creating was bad, was unrealistic and was frightening, as a matter of fact.

Truman will fare well in history, perhaps, as a president who was decisive and made decisions, and so forth. But he's not going to fare well in everybody's analysis of history. And he wouldn't fare well in mine, because I think Truman created many of the problems that later made it necessary for him to act in the way he did and to do the things he did. Korea was one of them.

I think the whole approach after World War II would have been different with Roosevelt. I've said many times if Roosevelt had survived, the post-war era would have been totally different. There would not have been this fearful withdrawing that took place. I think we would have had a more trusting exchange with other countries, including Russia, because I think Roosevelt had a good

Lindsley: rapport-- It doesn't mean you have to recognize and agree with Stalin in order to have a better relationship between the two countries and the peoples of the two countries.

But Truman made it hard. Truman frightened the people, and he helped create the climate in which Nixon and McCarthy were able to step, that's right. I don't think they could have become what they became if Roosevelt had not died and Truman became president.

Glaser: I don't know if one senator out of forty-eight can do much, but perhaps Mrs. Douglas could have helped to turn this tide.

Lindsley: Yes, she would have been a great person to have back there in the Senate during this period, no question about it. The fear was already rampant. And you're right, those who say that about Truman I think are correct--his cold war approach was devastating, and we've suffered for it ever since.

#### Political and Community Activities after 1950

[end tape 2, side A; begin tape 2, side B]

Glaser: What did you do, politically, after the 1950 campaign?

Lindsley: I did sort of withdraw from political activity after that campaign. I never went back onto the Democratic Central Committee and didn't get active in anything else until 1956, I mean in terms of campaigns. I was in clubs--I was in the Democratic Professional Club and some of the other Democratic Clubs. But in 1956 I was chairman of Richard Richards' Senate campaign. He was running for the United States Senate against Tom Kuchel, and I was co-chairman here in San Diego in 1956.

In 1957 and '58 I was president of the San Diego County Council of Democratic Clubs. Are you familiar with the Council of Clubs movement in California, the CDC? Okay, for two years I was chairman of the San Diego CDC, in '57 and '58. And '58 was the year of the big sweep; I was at that convention. Actually I was nominated by the San Diego delegation for lieutenant governor, but I declined in favor of Glenn Anderson, whom they elected.

Glaser: Have you ever gone to national conventions?

Lindsley: I've never gone to a national convention, no, never have; I've never tried. By and large, I've just been on the periphery of the established party organization. While I was chairman of the

Lindsley: Democratic Central Committee, (real young, real early) it was because I was the nominee of a faction of the party that wanted to get rid of the old wing, you know, and we happened to have enough votes. After I resigned, however, it fell back into the hands of the more conservative wing of the party and it remained that way for many years. Then I was on the executive committee for Adlai Stevenson's campaign in San Diego in '56. Well, I won't go over all this--on Van Deerlin's committee and Pat Brown's committee and chairman of Stanley Mosk's campaign for California attorney general in 1958. I went on the bench in 1960, so I've been out of politics for the last sixteen years.

Glaser: Who appointed you in 1960?

Lindsley: Pat Brown. I've been out of politics essentially since that time, but I've not been out of--I have participated in some things in the community where I think it was important. I've been active all along in minority community activities. I was on the Urban League--I'm on the Urban League board now. I've been a member of the Urban League board (that's what these two plaques are) for at least ten years or more. I was president for a couple of years, I think 1967 and 1968.

Glaser: What are the other two plaques on the wall?

Lindsley: These two are Urban League. This top one was the Phi Delta Kappa Lay Citizens Award for San Diego County in 1966, presented to me, "In recognition of his effort and support toward improving our American system of free public schools."

Then this one here was an award in 1975 by the California Trial Lawyers Association. "Hereby bestows their award for trial judge of the year, 1975, for California." So, I was selected in 1975 by the California Trial Lawyers' Association as the California Trial Judge of the year.

Glaser: And what is your involvement with the school desegregation case?

Lindsley: In 1965 the Board of Education appointed a committee, a Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities, to make an analysis of the school system in San Diego to determine what the status of racial imbalance may be, whether the schools are segregated and to what extent, and whether or not that has an effect upon the equal educational opportunities of the children of the school district.

Lindsley: This committee functioned from October of '65 until we made our report\* in August of '66. That report said the school system was indeed seriously imbalanced. We made recommendations as to what the school system ought to do about it, saying that if they didn't do it, undoubtedly they would be faced with legal action sooner or later. They didn't really do anything, and a lawsuit was finally filed based upon the report of this citizens committee, which is cited (you know, like the Kerner Commission) as the Lindsley Committee. They refer to the report as the Lindsley Report.

Anyway, that lawsuit is finally coming to trial; the lawsuit was filed in '69 or thereabouts. No, it was filed even before that, and it's finally coming to trial Wednesday of this week. They took my deposition on Friday afternoon and I'll be called, as the chairman of the committee, to testify as a witness. Here's a copy of my statement to the board.

Glaser: You do this as a concerned citizen, not as a Superior Court judge?

Lindsley: That's right.

Glaser: Fine, that gives me background to your current activities.

Lindsley: I'm still on the Urban League Board of Directors and active in that. That's what this represents here [indicates pin on lapel] --that's an Urban League To Be Equal sign. [Phone rings]

Transcriber: Pat Raymond  
Final Typist: Ann Enkoji

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\*A copy of the August 10, 1966 report from the Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities to the Board of Education, San Diego Unified School District has been placed in The Bancroft Library together with a copy of this interview. Also placed in the library is a copy of "Remarks to Board of Education, Delivered by Judge Byron F. Lindsley, August 10, 1966."



## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

JUDGE BYRON F. LINDSLEY

BORN: Sorona, Wisconsin  
April 28, 1915

ADDRESS: 7268 Carrizo Drive  
La Jolla, California 92037

FAMILY STATUS: Wife - Estelle M.  
Children - Byron F., Jr.  
Palmer E. (deceased)  
Philip P.

A. EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:I High School:

Imperial, California, 1929-1931. President of Student Body; (elected as sophomore to serve in junior year) President of Freshman and Sophomore Classes.

Grossmont, San Diego County. Graduated in 1933. Debating Team; Dramatics; Lettered in Basketball and Track; President of Glee Club and President of Hi-Y. Runner-up for Citizenship Award.

II College:

San Diego State College, 1933-1937. A.B. Economics Major, Political Science Minor. President of Student Body. President of Junior Class. Member of Student Council. Member of Blue Key National Honorary Service Fraternity. Alpha Tau Omega (Social Fraternity), Tau Sigma (Economic Fraternity). Lettered in Basketball 3 years. All-Conference 2 years. Glee Club. Letterman's Club.

III Graduate School:

American University Graduate School, Washington, D.C., 1937-1938. N.Y.A. Scholarship. Completed graduate work (except thesis) towards Masters Degree in Public Administration and Social Economics with honors.

IV Law School:

Georgetown Law School, Washington, D.C.,  
1941-1944, Doctor Juris. Winner of Father  
 Lucey Medal for highest scholastic average  
 in graduating class. First in class each  
 year. Georgetown Law Journal: Associate  
 Editor, Book Review Editor, Note Editor.

V Legal Experience:

Admitted to practice in California, District  
 of Columbia, and before the U. S.  
 Supreme Court.

1945-1960: Private practice of law in  
 California;  
 1945-1947 in Los Angeles;  
 1947-1960 in San Diego.

VI Teaching Experience:

1946-1947: Professor of Agency, Loyola Law  
 School, Los Angeles, California.

1947-1953) Instructor in Business Law, San  
 1963-1968) Diego State University.

1962-1963: Professor of Law (California Pro-  
 cedure) California Western Uni-  
 versity School of Law.

VII Judicial Experience:

1960 to      Judge of the Superior Court, State  
 Present:      of California, San Diego County.  
                  Have served on Juvenile Court,  
                  Family Court, Psychiatric Court.  
                  Handle general trial court for  
                  civil and criminal cases for most  
                  of 15 years on the bench. Presid-  
                  ing Judge of the Conciliation Court.

VIII Other Employment:

- 1943-1945: Director of Personnel, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.  
(Under Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress)
- 1942-1943: Assistant Director of Personnel, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- 1941-1942: Personnel Officer, Division of Special Information, Library of Congress. (This division later became part of OSS.)
- 1938-1941: Case worker and Case Supervisor, California State Relief Administration.

B. PROFESSIONAL BOARDS AND AFFILIATIONS: (Past and/or Present;  
Present underlined)

Conference of California Judges.

Association of Family Conciliation Courts, (International)

American Judicature Society.

American Bar Association.

American Bar Association - Family Law Section.

Executive Committee: Association of Family Conciliation Courts (1969 to present).

President: Association of Family Conciliation Courts.

Conference of California Judges, Seminar Committee.

Conference of Juvenile Court Judges.

California Bar.

San Diego County Bar Association.

Delta Theta Phi Law Fraternity.

American Academy of Political and Social Science.

American Political Science Association.

American Society for Public Administration .

Society for Personnel Administration .

Federal Council of Personnel Administration  
Chairman: Committee on Employee Relations .

President and Member San Diego County Law  
Library Board of Trustees .

President and Member San Diego County Law  
Library Justice Foundation .

C. POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

President of Young Democrats in San Diego County  
(1948).

Chairman of San Diego County Democratic Central  
Committee (1948-1949) (Resigned because of  
illness in family) .

Chairman of Helen Douglas for Senate Campaign  
in San Diego County (1950) .

Chairman of Richard Richards for Senate Campaign  
in San Diego County (1956) .

President of San Diego County Democratic Council  
of Clubs (1957-1958 -- 2 years) .

Member of Executive Committee of the Stevenson  
Campaign in San Diego (1956) .

Member of Executive Board of Democratic Profes-  
sional Club.

President of Democratic Professional Club  
(1955-1956) .

Member of Men's Democratic Club.

Member of Lionel Van Deerlin for Congress Com-  
mittee (1958) .

Member of Pat Brown for Governor Committee,  
San Diego (1958) .

Co-chairman of Pat Brown Littleman Committee,  
San Diego (1958).

Chairman of Stanley Mosk for Attorney General  
Campaign, San Diego County (1958).

Nominated for Lt. Governor, State of California,  
by San Diego Delegation to Fresno Conven-  
tion of California Council of Democratic  
Clubs (1958). Nomination declined in favor  
of Glen Anderson.

D. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: (Past and/or Present; Present  
underlined)

American Humanist Association.

Center For The Study of Democratic Institutions.

San Diego Urban League (Board of Directors)  
(President, 1967-1969).

Chairman: San Diego Convocation Center For The  
Study of Democratic Institutions (June 1971).

President of San Diego State College Alumni  
Association (1949).

Chairman of Church Board, Rolando Methodist  
Church.

Chairman of Advisory Board of Mental Hygiene  
Clinic for San Diego, appointed by Governor  
Knight.

Advisory Board, California Industries for the  
Blind, San Diego County, appointed by  
Governor Knight.

Advisory Board of State College "Y".

Advisory Board, League of Women Voters.

National Association for the Advancement of  
Colored People, Vice-President and Execu-  
tive Board Member, San Diego Branch.

American Civil Liberties Union.

Chairman of Advisory Board Day Treatment Center,  
appointed by Governor Brown.

San Diego Mental Health Association (Board of Directors).

Board of Directors Community Welfare Council.

Family Service Association.

Board of Directors Legal Aid Society (1969-1970).

Urban Coalition.

Fellowship of Reconciliation.

American Friends Service Committee; worked with and consulted on matters pertaining to Southern California Indians and other matters.

Past President of San Diego County Rose Society.

Chairman of Executive Board of San Diego Floral Association.

Chairman, Citizens Committee for Equal Educational Opportunities (1965-1966) (Appointed by City Board of Education).

Recipient, Lay Citizen's Award, San Diego County, 1966, awarded by Phi Delta Kappa "In recognition of his effort and support toward improving our American system of Free public schools."

Discussant, University of Chicago, Center for Continuing Education Conference on "Educational Dimensions of the Model Cities Program," May 19-21, 1967.

Witness before Joint Committees on the Judiciary of California Assembly and Senate, re California Family Court Act.

Speaker and panel discussant before universities, schools, student groups, churches, service, political and professional clubs on subjects pertaining to law, justice, education, family relations, race relations and religion.

Annually conduct moot court programs for law schools in the community.

Member of Dialogue, Citizens Interracial Committee (C.I.C.)

Design for Understanding: Citizens Interracial Committee, Permanent Panel Member (Panel would meet with members of the public throughout the community in schools, churches and other meeting places to explore ways of achieving better understanding among all races, religions and ethnic groups in the community).

San Diego Open Forum: President and Member of Board of Directors.

E. PUBLICATIONS:

1. Georgetown Law Journal (1944); student note:  
"Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies in Selective Service Cases."
2. California Western Law Review (1968, fall):  
"The Family Court -- A Rational, Reasonable and Constructive Revolution in Domestic Relations."
3. Dicta, San Diego County Bar Association monthly publication:  
"The Litigation Gap"; (June 1968).  
"Merit or Mediocrity -- The Judges Selection Plan" (July 1968).
4. Civil Rights Digest, A Quarterly of the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D.C., spring, 1969:  
"The Quality of Law Enforcement."  
A critical review..
5. USIU Doctoral Society Journal, June 1969:  
"Law -- Justice -- Morality".
6. Conciliation Courts Review, December 1969, publication of the International Conference of Conciliation Courts:  
"We Are Asking Too Much Of Marriage."
7. Coronado Journal, July 3, 1969: Reprint of Law Week Speech:  
"The American Dream of Justice."

8. Report of the Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities to the Board of Education, San Diego City Schools.  
(I participated in editing and writing of entire report and am sole author of the Introduction to Findings and of the Summary to the report.)  
Referred to as "The Lindsley Report."
9. San Diego Evening Tribune, December 25, 1974  
Tribune Town Hall  
"Marriage and The Family."
10. Have written many other things including speeches on various topics which are unpublished but available upon request.

(Copies of each of the above are available upon request.)



DOCUMENTS RECEIVED FROM JUDGE BYRON F. LINDSLEY FOR THE BANCROFT  
LIBRARY PERTAINING TO HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS'S 1950 CAMPAIGN FOR  
THE U.S. SENATE

(All are copies of the original material which have been retained  
by Judge Lindsley.)

"Representative Nixon's Voting Record.

"Congressional Record" 81st Congress, Second Session, Extension of  
Remarks of Hon. Helen Gahagan Douglas.

"100 Things You Should Know About Communism in the U.S.A." prepared and  
released by the Committee on Un-American Activities, U.S. House of  
Representatives.

Statement of Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas on Mundt-Nixon Bill.

"A B C OF THE DOUGLAS RECORD.

Voting Record of Helen Gahagan Douglas and Richard M. Nixon.

Background on Helen Gahagan Douglas - A brief report on some of the  
highlights of the 79th Congress.

Sample publicity material developed by Jules Maitland, never used:

"How'll You Have Your America?"

"So YOU'VE CHOSEN SIDES" (single page)

"So you've chosen sides" (three pages)

"and how would you present the case of HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS for  
UNITED STATES SENATOR"

Pink sheet: "Douglas-Marcantonio Voting Record"

San Diego Daily Journal, March 13, 1950, "Mrs. Douglas Plays 'Part-Time'  
Downey"

Who's Who in San Diego, Byron F. Lindsley

Photo of campaign committee

Candidate's campaign statement of finances, November 7, 1950

San Diego Voter, Thursday, June 1, 1950

Executive Committee, Douglas for Senate Club

Douglas Campaign Budget, 7/15/50 to 11/8/50

Application and permit for Civic Center Use of School Property, 3-12-50

Analysis of Primary Vote

Letter from Mrs. Douglas re Lionel Van Deerlin

Assorted newspaper articles and pictures

Correspondence with campaign committee members and minutes of meetings

Correspondence with Helen Gahagan Douglas

Correspondence with L.A. office: George Douglas and Ruth Lybeck

Thank you notes to various newspaper editors

Correspondence with Archibald MacLeish

Lease for rental of Store Room No. 1020 8th Avenue

"The Democrat", July 1948

# Peace Election Issue, Says Mrs. Douglas

## Nominee Blasts Nixon, Sen. McCarthy, Opposition Newspapers in Talk Here

By HENRY LOVE

Enduring world peace, free from aggression and from subversion by outside forces, is the overriding issue of the campaign, Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas, Democratic nominee for U.S. senator, declared on a San Diego visit last night.

She blasted at her opponent, Rep. Richard M. Nixon, Republican nominee, and at U.S. Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy; criticized newspapers opposing her, defended her vote against military aid to Greece and Turkey and said she would continue to vote against the House Un-American Activities Committee "unless it is miraculously reformed and not used as a political gimmick."

### LABOR-ACT OPPOSED

She spoke at a rally in Carpenters' Hall before 400, talked to a large meeting of union butchers and spoke at a meeting of the Labor League for Political Education. At the labor sessions she spoke against the Taft-Hartley Act.

Mrs. Douglas commended her own record, citing activity in the Foreign Affairs Committee, for labor legislation, the United Nations, foreign relief legislation and social security measures.

Swinging into foreign policy, she asserted that formation of the international force in the Korean war was proof of the soundness of U.S. foreign policy.

### TELLS OF DESERTION

Mrs. Douglas said she deserted the Republican Party in 1932 because of what she termed the poverty of its leadership that "had no answers to the problems of the nation." The job facing the nation today cannot be done with a G. O. P. government in Washington, she added.

"Speakers like Sen. McCarthy are trying to lead us back into isolationism," she said.

In a fling at the Republican Women's Federation here, she said its action against flying the United Nations flag on a parity with the American flag is another instance of the "isolation spirit in the Republican Party."

### BACKS HATCH LAW

"It would be disastrous if that sort of representation were in the majority," she said.

To complaints of some Democratic partisans against the Hatch Act restrictions against political activity by federal employees, she said she is for the act. Turning to Nixon she charged he opposed Korean aid, opposed school lunches and the social security program. "but finally voted for it knowing it would be political suicide to oppose it further."

Nixon has, according to Mrs. Douglas, "one of the most

tionary records in Congress, and makes Sen. Taft look like a liberal."

"He says he is against communism," she went on, "yet he voted against slum clearance, against remedying conditions that do not foster democracy."

As she went on, it seemed she did not think Nixon ever had voted for anything she thinks is good.

"All these Republicans," Mrs. Douglas said, "want to do just one thing—cut taxes for the big corporations. They do not think in human terms, and you cannot build peace in the world unless you do."

"Communism never will be a threat in America if you keep an enlightened government in Washington. The biggest communistic vote was cast in 1932 after 12 years of Republican control."

### GAVE UP CAREER

She gave up a fortune and her movie career to enter politics and seek to fight for the things she believes in, the nominee declared. Her husband gave up a career to enlist in the armed services, too, she added.

Incidentally, her husband's brother, George Douglas, who was here yesterday, said Melvyn Douglas has not been active in this state in behalf of Rep. Douglas because he has been playing in a show that just closed in Toronto.

In slapping at the G.O.P. stand against the administration foreign policy, Mrs. Douglas said it tends to hurt the United States abroad to have its leadership assailed from within the nation.

### CONFUSION CHARGED

The Republicans, she said, are just trying to confuse the issue. She devoted some attention to Sen. McCarthy's charges of communism in the State Department, asserting they had been disproved.

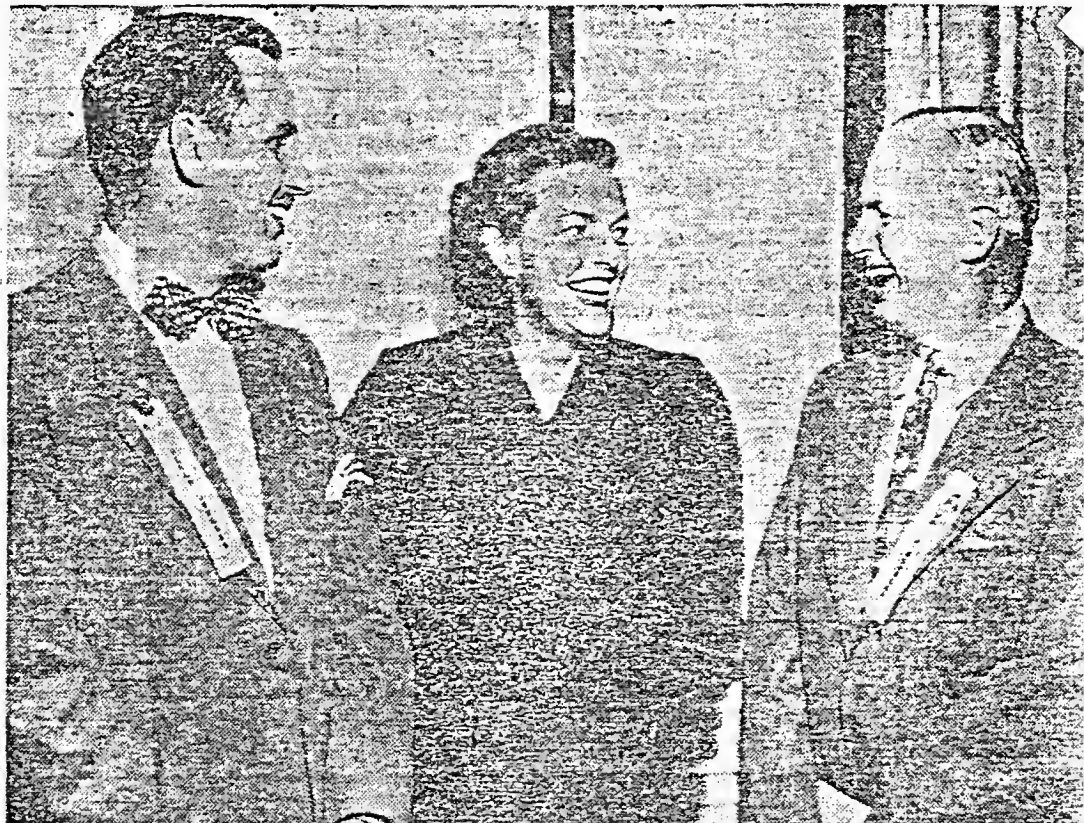
Mrs. Douglas said she is for free enterprise, and is opposed by the monopolists.

"They are trying to steal your program," she said. "Do not work for me; work for yourselves."

Mrs. Douglas said newspapers in California have not been giving all the Democratic facts in the campaign.

Mrs. Douglas' victory over Nixon was predicted here Sunday night by Drew Pearson, columnist. Speaking at the Russ Auditorium he expressed belief that the communism campaign against her would boomerang and bring her victory by a slight margin.

On her arrival last night the nominee was met by her local chairman, Byron Lindsley, and her vice chairman, Armistead B. Carter. She closed her talks last night at a meeting of postal workers and plans to leave today to continue her campaign.



Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas, center, Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate, smiles with her campaign chairman, Byron Lindsley, left and the vice chairman, Armistead B. Carter, before swinging into an intensive speaking program here last night.

# HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS

FOR

## United States Senator

25



1020 EIGHTH AVE.  
SAN DIEGO 1, CALIFORNIA  
FRANKLIN 7549

SAN DIEGO COMMITTEE  
CHAIRMEN

Campaign  
BYRON F. LINDSLEY

Vice-Chairman  
ARMISTEAD B. CARTER

Finance  
GRACE B. RITTOFF  
ELI H. LEVENSON

Publicity  
LOUISE McLEAN

Executive Sec'y.  
HELEN LUSTIG

2 SAN DIEGO JOURNAL Friday, Mar. 24, 1950

# McCarthy Blas

## County Chiefs Named In Douglas Campaign

Helen Gahagan Douglas supporters in San Diego county today had fully fired the campaign torch they hope to carry before three important segments of the area's voting public.

Chairmen were appointed at a meeting last night for committees which will seek to rally workingmen, veterans and women of the county.

Byron F. Lindsley, chairman of the county campaign in behalf of Mrs. Douglas, named John J. Blat as the chairman of the committee for the International Association of Machinists.

Robert Spears was named for the CIO and Orrin Alfred for the AFL.

Chester White was appointed for fishermen's groups, and Joseph Jennis for veterans' groups.

Speakers to women will be organized by Mrs. Zola Johnson in the city, and Mrs. Zella Crown in the county.

At the meeting last night held at the new county Douglas headquarters, 1020 Eighth, Lindsley also named Mrs. Grace Ritoff as chairman of precinct workers.

He appointed Miss Louise Dar-

by, chairman for the committee for formal opening of the new headquarters next week, at a date yet to be designated. Mrs. Helen Lustig was named office campaign manager.

Meanwhile, the Valley Democratic Club at a meeting in El Cajon Carpenters Hall last night, endorsed Mrs. Douglas, James Roosevelt for governor and Robert Driver for state senator.

John Hunter, club president, named a fact-finding committee to look into other candidacies. It is composed of Ed Gates, Henry Eckstrom and Ralph Burnside.

Four members are candidates for the Democratic County Central Committee. They are Hunter, Burnside and Lawanda Dwyer, all El Cajon, in the second supervisorial district, and Roy Edward Crane, Alpine, in the fifth district.



## DOUGLAS-MARCANTONIO VOTING RECORD

Many persons have requested a comparison of the voting records of Congresswoman Helen Douglas and the notorious Communist party-liner, Congressman Vito Marcantonio of New York.

Mrs. Douglas and Marcantonio have been members of Congress together since January 1, 1945. During that period, Mrs. Douglas voted the same as Marcantonio 354 times. While it should not be expected that a member of the House of Representatives should always vote in opposition to Marcantonio, it is significant to note, not only the **great number** of times which Mrs. Douglas voted in agreement with him, but also the issues on which almost without exception they always saw eye to eye, to-wit: Un-American Activities and Internal Security.

### Here is the Record!

#### VOTES AGAINST COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES

Both Douglas and Marcantonio voted **against** establishing the Committee on Un-American Activities. 1/3/45. Bill passed.

Both voted on three separate occasions **against** contempt proceedings against persons and organizations which refused to reveal records or answer whether they were Communists. 4/16/46, 6/26/46, 11/24/47. Bills passed.

Both voted on four separate occasions **against** allowing funds for investigation by the Un-American Activities Committee. 5/17/46, 3/9/48, 2/9/49, 3/23/50. (The last vote was 348 to 12.) All bills passed.

#### COMMUNIST-LINE FOREIGN POLICY VOTES

Both voted **against** Greek-Turkish Aid Bill. 5/9/47. (It has been established that without this aid Greece and Turkey would long since have gone behind the Iron Curtain.) Bill passed.

Both voted on two occasions **against** free press amendment to UNRRA appropriation bill, providing that no funds should be furnished any country which refused to allow free access to the news of activities of the UNRRA by press and radio representatives of the United States. 11/1/45, 6/28/46. Bills passed. (This would in effect have denied American relief funds to Communist dominated countries.)

Both voted **against** refusing Foreign Relief to Soviet-dominated countries **UNLESS** supervised by Americans. 4/30/47. Bill passed 324 to 75.

#### VOTE AGAINST NATIONAL DEFENSE

Both voted **against** the Selective Service Act of 1948. 6/18/48. Bill passed.

**ON ALL OF THE ABOVE VOTES** which have occurred since Congressman Nixon took office on January 1, 1947, **HE has voted exactly opposite to the Douglas-Marcantonio Axis!**

After studying the voting comparison between Mrs. Douglas and Marcantonio, is it any wonder that the Communist line newspaper, the Daily People's World, in its lead editorial on January 31, 1950, labeled Congressman Nixon as "The Man To Beat" in this Senate race and that the Communist newspaper, the New York Daily Worker, in the issue of July 28, 1947, selected Mrs. Douglas along with Marcantonio as "One of the Heroes of the 80th Congress."

**REMEMBER!** The United States Senate votes on ratifying international treaties and confirming presidential appointments. Would California send Marcantonio to the United States Senate?

#### VOTES AGAINST LOYALTY AND SECURITY LEGISLATION

Both voted on two separate occasions **against** bills requiring loyalty checks for Federal employees. 7/15/47, 6/29/49. Bills passed.

Both voted **against** the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1948, requiring registration with the Attorney General of Communist party members and communist controlled organizations. Bill passed, 519 to 58. 5/19/48. **AND AFTER KOREA** both again voted **against** it. Bill passed 8/29/50, 354 to 20.

**AFTER KOREA**, on July 12, 1950, Marcantonio and Douglas and 12 others voted **against** the Security Bill, to permit the heads of key National Defense departments, such as the Atomic Energy Commission, to discharge government workers found to be poor security risks! Bill passed, 327 to 14.

#### VOTE AGAINST CALIFORNIA

Both recorded **against** confirming title to Tidelands in California and the other states affected. 4/30/48. Bill passed 257-29.

#### VOTES AGAINST CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION OF COMMUNIST AND OTHER ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

Both voted **against** investigating the "whitewash" of the AMERASIA case. 4/18/46. Bill passed.

Both voted **against** investigating why the Soviet Union was buying as many as 60,000 United States patents at one time. 3/4/47. Bill passed.

Both voted **against** continuing investigation of numerous instances of illegal actions by OPA and the War Labor Board. 1/18/45. Bill passed.

Both voted on two occasions **against** allowing Congress to have access to government records necessary to the conduct of investigations by Senate and House Committees. 4/22/48, 5/15/48. Bills passed.

#### NIXON FOR U. S. SENATOR CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

##### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

John Walton Dinkelspiel, Chairman  
1151 Market Street  
San Francisco—UNDERHILL 3-1416

##### CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

B. M. Hoblick, Chairman  
820 Van Ness Avenue  
Fresno—Phone 44116

##### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Bernard Brannen, Chairman  
117 W. 9th St., Los Angeles  
TRINITY 0661



Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Helen O. Lustig

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS'S 1950 CAMPAIGN  
IN SAN DIEGO AND IMPERIAL COUNTIES

An Interview Conducted by  
Eleanor Glaser  
in 1976

Underwritten by grants from:

National Endowment for the Humanities, Rockefeller Foundation,  
Members and Friends of the Los Angeles Democratic Women's Forum

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HELEN LUSTIG



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Mrs. Helen Lustig was interviewed at the suggestion of Helen Gahagan Douglas, for whom she had served as executive secretary of the 1950 campaign in San Diego and Imperial counties.

Mrs. Lustig lives in a pleasant garden-type condominium in the Point Loma section of San Diego. Although just blocks from a busy freeway, the development's tree-lined, curved streets suggest suburbia. However this quietness is frequently disturbed by low-flying planes taking off or landing at nearby Lindbergh Airport. A gardener cutting grass next to the apartment added to the noise, but neither the noise nor the discomfort of recent foot surgery distracted Mrs. Lustig.

Although contacted just one week before, Mrs. Lustig was prepared for the interview on November 1, 1976. She had drawn up a list of names of campaign participants and had spent time thinking about the events of the bitter campaign twenty-six years earlier. Purposefulness and competence were conveyed by Mrs. Lustig's manner as she reflected on questions put to her. Still devoted to Mrs. Douglas, she was intent on being as honest and objective as possible; partisan statements were labeled as such. After all prepared questions had been covered she resumed a discussion of campaign workers. That Mrs. Lustig feels a strong loyalty was evidenced by her statement, spoken after the tape recorder had been packed away: "We wanted to write off anyone not 100 percent for Helen."

Mrs. Lustig lightly edited the interview transcript when it was sent to her for review, but in order to add information or more clearly state her views, she expanded a number of her statements. She also has deposited some material, saved from the 1950 campaign, in The Bancroft Library.

Eleanor Glaser  
Interviewer-Editor

10 July 1978  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720



VII EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS'S 1950  
CAMPAIGN IN SAN DIEGO AND IMPERIAL COUNTIES

[Interview 1: November 1, 1976]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Primary Campaign

Campaign Committee

Glaser: What is your own background, and how did you get involved in politics?

Lustig: Well, my husband and I left the United States in 1933. We were both very young and very apolitical. We went to Australia; we lived there for almost ten years, came back to the United States, and were still not terribly involved in politics. Our first real involvement in politics--well, let me go back.

About 1945 I joined the League of Democratic Women, a very active political organization. And that was the first time that I really became aware, really aware, of politics, because in the interim we had had children, there was World War II, and one thing and another. I really took much less of an interest in politics than I should have. But in joining the league, I became more involved in politics.

When Helen Douglas decided to run for the Senate, some of the people who knew me, especially the women in the League of Democratic Women, thought that I would be a good person to help in that campaign.

Glaser: Had you done anything with her campaign when she was running for Congress?

Lustig: No, nothing whatsoever because it wasn't our district at all, and we didn't participate--no one in San Diego that I'm aware of participated in her congressional races. We did know that both she and her husband were very liberal. We were very admiring of what they had done in the San Joaquin Valley when they went into the Valley with a group who were trying to organize the farm workers. This was probably in the 1930s or early 1940s. But we took no particular interest in her campaign.

Glaser: Would that be the same answer for her becoming a National Committee-woman too?

Lustig: That's right.

Anyway, it was discussed amongst various people without my knowledge and finally they approached me and asked if I would help manage that campaign. I thought it over for a while and then decided, yes, that I would. Then from that point on, when I went into it, it was practically my whole life for all those months, because you can't be around Helen for very long and not get as enthusiastic as she is.

There's a lot, I realize now in retrospection about her and about that campaign, that I did automatically but wasn't aware that I was doing at that time. I realized how terribly issue-oriented she was; I realized--I wasn't aware, really, that this was in many areas a female versus male thing. It was many years later that I began to realize that we were (I think I'm getting off that first category about my background and so forth) really in many instances almost sabotaged by the male politicians here.

Glaser: In setting up the office and the work you did, how did your being a woman enter into it?

Lustig: In no way whatsoever, to my knowledge except that it was the League of Democratic Women who seemed to take over that aspect of it. While it was a group of concerned Democrats who chose me and who helped set up the office, many of the volunteers who helped answer phones, stuff envelopes, and so forth, were members of the league. In that area I suppose my being a woman entered into it. But to my knowledge, there was no opposition from the men's Democratic Club or any of the well-known politicians here--the big money givers. To my knowledge there was no opposition because, I would presume, they looked on my being executive secretary in the old way: I would manage to get the envelope stuffers and the telephone workers and that sort of thing. It didn't work out in that way because I became much more active in the campaign than I think they anticipated would happen.



Glaser: You were making decisions?

Lustig: Yes, I was very much in the decision-making process.

Glaser: Would you care to go into that?

Lustig: Well, I wasn't making decisions on my own, but I was very much a part of the decision-making process. These were day-to-day things that would come up. There was a small group of very active people, and as I saw the necessity for these decisions arising I could very easily get them together (our office was downtown), and we would discuss it. We tried to have a very active, involved committee. And I must say they were. The committee that we had was terribly good.

Glaser: Can you name them?

Lustig: Well, I was trying to think of all of them, and I just can't remember them all. I did, as I thought of some, jot them down. Many of them are now dead, the older ones. Grace Rittoff, Lionel Van Deerlin. Of course, Byron Lindsley was the chairman. Vince Whelan (that's Vince Whelan, Sr. His son is now a judge here and he has retired; he was also named a judge later.) Armie [Armistead] Carter. A young man by the name of Dave Feldman who is, I think, a sociologist and teaches at San Diego State, and the young lady who later became his wife, Marlene Jones. And they brought in with them as workers a lot of the young people. They were very young then; they were all going to school as I recall, to state college at that time. They brought a lot of the young, very active, very idealistic people with them.

This was the thing about Helen's campaign. So many of the people were real idealists. They had such faith in her as one who would carry out their ideals.

Let me see; Louise Darby, who was the president of the League of Democratic Women at that time and who is now dead. Louise McLean, who was a tremendous supporter of Democratic candidates, financially. Henry Cramer, an old-time politician here who is now dead. D.G. Hamilton, who was supposed to be "Mr. Democrat" here because of the money he was able to raise. He's now dead. Some others on the committee and/or exceptionally helpful were: Lydia Pritchard, Fay Henderson, Jim Curry, James Gleason, Ed Reilly, Edith Orcutt, Gladys Coit, Zella Crown, Bebe Banks, Verna King, Eddy Orcutt.

There were two men--I don't remember whether they were on our committee or on Jimmy Roosevelt's committee. He was running for governor, as you know, against Warren at that time. And after

Lustig: Helen won the primary, they moved into our office. We had a very large office, and they moved into our office, also.

I was very much opposed to that, and I was overruled. For financial reasons they used our office. So some of the people from there--we sort of commingled some of our meetings and decisions, and so forth. Not to a very large extent, but to a certain extent. There were two people, Murray Goodrich, who is now dead, and Harry Farb, who is still living, who I believe were on the Roosevelt committee but would come in on some of our meetings. We felt that the Roosevelt committee was really hanging on to the Douglas coat-tails.

Glaser: This setup was for San Diego County and Imperial County?

Lustig: And Imperial County. Imperial County wasn't too important. It was small; there weren't too many people there and we did go down occasionally. But it was not a very important part of the campaign.

#### Democratic Strength

Glaser: What was the proportion at that time of Republicans to Democrats within the two counties, could you estimate?

Lustig: I don't recall exactly, but I'm quite sure that we didn't have the preponderance of Democrats that we have now. As you know, we have a much higher Democratic registration, but they don't vote Democratic. But at that time, I don't think we had that many Democrats. I'm trying to recall.

There may have been, because a lot of Democrats came in as workers in the aircraft factories, and we did have some strongly Democratic areas where housing had been developed specifically for aircraft workers. They came in, a lot of them, from the Midwest. We felt that they, being workers, would make good strong Democratic areas. But they didn't always vote that way. They were making pretty good money, they didn't seem to vote Democratic.

Glaser: At that period San Diego had a very reactionary reputation.

Lustig: Yes, we were a very reactionary area--terribly. So that the Communist issue, which the Nixon people raised against Helen, was very, very strong here and very effective.

Glaser: How would you assess Mrs. Douglas, both personally and as a politician?

Lustig: Well, personally, I think to know her was to love her. I think anyone that came in contact with her personally really loved her. I think some of the men particularly thought that she talked too much; we got a little bit of feedback in that way. But we were so fiercely loyal to her that I don't think a lot of people expressed themselves as they might have, because of our loyalty and because of what they might get in return from us.

Glaser: Are you suggesting that these were men who were workers on the committee?

Lustig: Not the people on our committee, rather the more "political" people in San Diego who we tried to involve in our campaign and who agreed but who didn't do all they should have. They did just enough to play it safe, as I explained. In fact the more "professional Democrats" actually tried to sabotage our campaign during the primary. D.G. Hamilton, who controlled the purse strings of the Democratic party here, started another women's club here, the Dolly Madisons, and paid the women to work for Manchester Boddy--trying to draw the workers from the Douglas office. He really tried to factionalize the Democrats. But it had a negative effect on our workers.

I told you before that I thought that a lot of what I'm feeling now came long, long after that campaign. As I got older, as I got more experienced and as women's lib became more popular, I began to reflect on what had happened then. And a lot of those people were paying little more than lip service to us. As I became more involved in politics later on and saw how some of these same people reacted in other campaigns, I realized that they weren't doing what they should have been doing. People that we depended on for financing, for instance, were not doing what they should have been doing--were not bringing in the kinds of money they should have been bringing in to help us.

We were really running what I would now call a real grass-roots campaign. We were begging for dollar bills. We got them from a heck of a lot of people. We did a lot of things--we sent out letters--and the sort of things that the professional politician would never do in the way that we did it. It was effective, but it wasn't bringing in the kind of money that was necessary. It was bringing in dollar bills and two dollars and five dollars.

People were stopping in the office and giving us little bits of money, which was just great, we thought. And I still think is just great, because it meant an involvement of people who had never been involved in a political campaign before because their little bits of money didn't mean anything.

Lustig: But the people who should have been bringing in very large contributions from others, who should have been the ones who were collecting large contributions from other people, just weren't doing it.

Glaser: Were you getting any money from the state party headquarters?

Lustig: We were not getting money but we were getting ads paid for and postage paid for and our stationary printed and our window cards, our 2 x 4s, and those sorts of things. For instance, I remember now that we started out by doing our own bumper stickers. But then they sent us--evidently when they got more money, they sent us enough. And this became a big item in those days, contrary to what it is now.

Glaser: Was Bill Malone the state party treasurer?

Lustig: The name doesn't ring a bell with me, I just don't remember.

But we started out entirely on our own, and it was only towards the end that we got money. We even tied up some radio time for ourselves, and then later on we found out that they were doing some state-wide. So then we were included in that, where they got better rates, and so forth.

#### Newspapers in San Diego

Lustig: We were getting very little publicity in the newspapers. At the time of the primary and early in the general [election campaign], there was the San Diego Union and the afternoon paper, which at that time did not belong to the Copley press. It belonged to Clinton McKinnon, who had been a Democratic congressman here. It was called the San Diego Journal. There was also the San Diego Tribune, so there were two afternoon papers: The Journal and the Tribune.

The city editor of that paper [the San Diego Journal] was Lionel Van Deerlin, who is now a congressman; and he was very, very much a part of Helen's campaign. Besides the paper being a Democratic paper, he personally felt very involved in the campaign.

I may be wrong about this; I seem to recall that there were only two newspapers in all of California that endorsed her. One was the Sacramento Bee, I believe, (perhaps one of the San Francisco papers, but I don't recall that) and the San Diego Journal. And we depended greatly on the Journal for the publicity we couldn't

Lustig: get from the Union and the Tribune.

Early in the general [election campaign], without any notification, Mr. McKinnon sold the Journal to the Evening Tribune. We all felt that it was a terrible sellout. It was not too long before the general election. We felt the paper was a very important part of our campaign, and we were just devastated when it happened, because the Tribune took over right away and the Journal disappeared.

Van Deerlin came on to our committee. A man by the name of Noonan, who was a political cartoonist, came on to our committee, and I think a couple of others from that paper came on to our committee.

It was at that time, during that very same period, when a few of these people, including my husband, helped start a paper called The Point. It was not a daily. It started out, I think, as a monthly and eventually became San Diego Magazine. It was financed in part by Louise McLean, by Armie Carter, a few other people like that. It was a lot of these liberal people who felt that we had no liberal voice of any kind in San Diego. And they got together and either planned it or actually started it, right during this same period after the Journal folded. The Point eventually was bought out by Jack Viotor and became the slick magazine which it is now, San Diego Magazine.

Glaser: Speaking of newspapers, do you have any idea why Manchester Boddy entered the primary when Mrs. Douglas had clear sailing up until that time--why he entered so unexpectedly?

Lustig: Yes, I recall that, but I can't tell you exactly when in the campaign it was.

Glaser: And you have no idea why this came about? It was rumored that while he was a Democrat, there was Republican money behind his paper--Hearst money and oil money, I believe.

Lustig: I vaguely remember hearing about it. I can't speak about it with any kind of authority at all. I remember that there was discussion, and it seemed to be actual fact that we were discussing, that there was oil money and that it had been offered to both Helen and to Nixon and that she refused it. Now, this is just coming back to me, and I can't speak with any certainty on it but I remember that we seemed to have some sort of authoritative fact that this was true. [Thinking it over slowly]

We also had no respect whatsoever for Manchester Boddy because we didn't think he was a Democrat, in the true sense of the word. We felt he couldn't begin to compare to Helen as far as

Lustig: the ideals that we were fighting for.

Helen Gahagan Douglas as Campaigner and Her Relationship to Volunteers

Glaser: You were speaking earlier of the loyalty to Mrs. Douglas. What was the relationship between Mrs. Douglas and the men? Could they take direction from her?

Lustig: It's very hard for me to evaluate that. The men who were really loyal to her, like for instance Byron Lindsley and these young people that I spoke about, Van Deerlin--those people who had the same hopes, who had the same idealism, who had the same purposes in wanting to see her elected--those people, yes, there was no question about it. They respected her and discussions between them were very, very satisfactory.

The ones whom I would now call the political bosses of San Diego, I don't really know, I would doubt it. As I say, in retrospection now, I would doubt it very much. When she was in town they would come in and meet with her. When we set up various functions for her, many of them would be there. But I think they were just playing it safe, just in case she was elected. They had to be part of this whole thing, but I don't think that they did things they should have done as far as getting out the vote, as far as raising the money to help get out the vote, to help publicize her, that sort of thing.

I remember one instance where one of these men, this was Murray Goodrich, who said that he wanted us to set up a luncheon for her. He was going to raise--I forget what the amount of money was, but for us it was a very large amount of money. He was going to see to it that these people came and would pledge these amounts of money if we could get her to come down and talk to them. So we did, we arranged it, and she was to our way of thinking a very impressive speaker that day. It was a small luncheon, it was all men--businessmen here--and it was a total flop as far as a money-raiser was concerned.

Glaser: Was this in the primary or the general election?

Lustig: They didn't stick their neck out in the primary.

Glaser: They waited?

Lustig: They waited. And most of these people that I call the political

Lustig: bosses, like D.G. Hamilton and Henry Cramer and Burt Vaughn, who just recently died; they waited. They waited until the general.

Glaser: How many times did Mrs. Douglas come down to San Diego?

Lustig: I can't give you the number of times. She was very generous about coming down whenever we really had things set up for her. We did realize that she had a whole state to cover and that money was quite scarce. But we had her down quite frequently, and I think we had quite successful meetings.

Glaser: How do you view her as a campaigner, either for groups or on a one-to-one basis?

Lustig: Well, I must say that my perspective was not only warped but fairly naive also. I think (I thought then but I still think) that she's a fantastic campaigner. I think that her enthusiasm wins people over. I think that she's a very attractive person. She was a beautiful woman. She still is, but of course at that time she was that much younger. She was really a most attractive person, and a very warm person. I think that she is a marvelous campaigner, in both a large group and especially on a one-to-one basis. She makes you feel that you're terribly important to her.

Glaser: I did read one criticism, that she didn't know how to terminate.

Lustig: Yes, I told you that before, that these men especially felt--and as I say, they were a little bit leery about expressing their views of anything about her that was negative. They were a little bit leery about expressing it to us. But I think we recognized that too because I can recall a couple of times when I personally felt it from an audience reaction and tried to motion to her to cut it off.

And she herself realized that, because I remember once she said, "You throw me into a pond and I'll come up talking." She realized it, but she was so--She had so much to give that she couldn't stop, even though she realized it. There was always more and more and more that she wanted to tell the people.

Glaser: What was the role of her husband?

Lustig: Well, he didn't come down at all. There was some talk at that time that they were not getting along, it was sort of an undercurrent. We had no evidence of it whatsoever, but then her brother-in-law, Melvyn's brother, came down very frequently. He was a part of the campaign. He and his wife both came down very frequently to see if they could help in any way.

Glaser: What was his name?

Lustig: I think it was Hesselberg. I think he went by the old name, if I recall.

Glaser: What was his first name, do you remember?

Lustig: I don't remember. I ought to remember but I don't. If I could ever find any of those records.

Glaser: Was it George?

Lustig: It might have been, that has a faint ring of recollection to me. And I think probably the most valuable thing about his coming down, as I recall, was the fact that he could be introduced as Melvyn's brother. I think that was probably the most valuable thing he had to offer at that time. He and his wife did try to be very helpful and were willing to do anything we asked of them.

Glaser: What was her relationship to other women--those who were workers and those who were voters? Was there any resentment because she was so well-endowed with beauty and intelligence?

Lustig: Not to my knowledge.

Glaser: And yet there were a lot of women who organized against her, I believe.

Lustig: Not here. I don't recall that.

Glaser: Perhaps that was more in the Los Angeles area. Kathleen Norris was one woman, and there was another who had been the National Democratic Committee Chairwoman from Kentucky for several terms. They were organized against her--Kathleen Norris and Catherine Connors Goetz of Los Angeles. Also, Nixon had a flying squadron of women in the Los Angeles area, and I wondered if there was that kind of an organization here.

Lustig: I don't recall at all that we had that type of problem here. It would be interesting if Byron [Judge Lindsley] remembers that, but I don't recall that at all.

Glaser: You saw her as motivating women and winning them over?

Lustig: Yes indeed.

Glaser: Do you have any idea why Senator Downey retired from the race?

Lustig: No, I don't remember. Not at all.



General Election Campaign

## Issues

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

- Glaser: Nixon said later that he felt justified in red-baiting because it had been started by the Democrats themselves in the primary.
- Lustig: Well, I don't have any strong feelings about that. And I think the fact that she won the primary here would indicate that it was not very effective, because this is, and was at that time especially, a very reactionary area. It couldn't have been very effective if she won the primary, and she won it in San Diego County. I don't have any strong recollection of that aspect of the Boddy campaign.
- Glaser: When you moved on to the general election campaign, what were the issues?
- Lustig: Well, the Central Valley Authority was one issue that we all felt very strongly about. Old age assistance, a universal old-age assistance instead of each area or each state or each county having their own, was, as I recall, a novel thing here amongst many of the voters. They hadn't given it that kind of thought at all. But with so many people coming into California because we had a good old-age assistance law here, people began to think about that and think how much more sense that would make. The liberal issues-- defense of her votes. You know, Nixon paired her votes with the liberal candidate from New York--
- Glaser: Vito Marcantonio.
- Lustig: Marcantonio, yes. Unfortunately this had to become a defense and then had to be explained, not only the mechanics of it, how (you've seen that pink sheet I presume ) Nixon's campaign against Jerry Voorhis became a thing that she was questioned about, or that we were questioned about.

The cost of living--the economic situation because she had posters showing her bringing that basket of groceries into Congress. You're aware of that, I'm sure. When she was a Congresswoman, she had gone out to shop and had brought a basket of groceries onto the floor of the Congress to show the costs of food. So the cost of food then, just as now, was an issue.

Glaser: How important was the federal control of off shore oil lands for this campaign?

Lustig: It wasn't too important to us, as I recall, because it never occurred to us that we were going to be involved in that part of it. The oil thing came in only because of the fact that oil money was coming in to California and we were afraid of it.

Glaser: By "oil money coming in," do you mean as the oil was taken from the sea, or do you mean politically, to be used against you?

Lustig: Politically, to be used against her. We had what we felt was pretty strong evidence that Nixon was getting oil money, and this became a pretty worrying thing. As far as off shore oil here, as I recall it didn't enter into it. It's only now that they're beginning to talk about drilling ninety miles off shore here. We never thought we had it. It had never been explored, and we never thought it would ever reach here.

#### Red-Baiting and Opposition to Helen Gahagan Douglas

Glaser: At what point in the general campaign did you become aware that Nixon was going to red-bait?

Lustig: Very early in the campaign, as I recall. I think we were aware of it almost immediately in the general, as I recall. And we were very fearful about her having to go on the defensive. I know we wanted her to do an offensive campaign, that was our own feeling. We were very much afraid that because of the amount of publicity that he was getting and the campaign that he was putting on and the questions that would be raised, that she would have to go on the defensive. As I recall, that was quite early in the campaign.

Glaser: There was a statement in the publication, The Southern California Quarterly; "It was not red-baiting per se which defeated Mrs. Douglas so much as it was the ineffective strategy used to counter Nixon's unscrupulous demagoguery."\*

Lustig: I think I would agree with that because, as Nixon demonstrated later, he didn't actually come out and say that she's a communist or that

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\* Ingrid Winther Scobie, "Helen Gahagan Douglas and Her 1950 Senate Race with Richard Nixon," Southern California Quarterly, Spring 1976, pp.113-123.

Lustig: she's pro-communist. But he created an aura, he talked all around, so that you got the impression from him.

But if you actually examined his statements, it wasn't true; he didn't say these things. It's just the impression, so that you went away from whatever you had been listening to thinking, "Oh sure, if not an actual communist, she's certainly pro-communist." And he did things like printing those flyers on pink paper.

Glaser: Did you ever hear him personally?

Lustig: Oh yes, I went to every meeting that he went to here. Absolutely.

Glaser: What was your reaction to him as a campaigner?

Lustig: Well, I so thoroughly disliked the man that I couldn't be objective. I really totally and completely and thoroughly disliked the man. And then I had read so much in working in the campaign about his tactics, the way he worked.

I recall very, very vividly something that Helen had said to us that proved to be true. This was in a very small meeting of our committee that she said, "You know, what happens to me..." (I repeated this to her not very long ago. She was in San Diego to give a talk, and I repeated this to her.) She said, "You know, what happens to me personally really isn't very important. But that pipsqueak (and that's the word that she used) has his eye on the White House and if he ever gets there, God help us all." I don't think I've ever heard more prophetic words than that.

We became so aware of the tactics that he was using (and he always seemed to me a rather slippery sort of person), and I went to every one of his meetings when he appeared in San Diego, everywhere that he appeared, that I couldn't be objective about him at all.

Glaser: How effective was Mrs. Douglas's Blue Book?\*

Lustig: I don't think it was very effective. It was quite voluminous, as you know. I don't know how wide the distribution was, do you know? I don't recall. We tried to use it as much as possible, in publicity and one thing and another, but I really don't know that it was very effective at that point. I seem to recall that it came out

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\* "Helen Gahagan Douglas vs Richard Nixon; Here is FULL Record of Their Votes in Congress."

- Lustig: quite late in the campaign. Am I correct, do you know when it appeared? I seem to recall that it came out quite late in the campaign. I thought it was a marvelous compilation, but how effective it was, I just don't know.
- Glaser: How damaging to her was the support that she got from red-front organizations--not communist, but red-front?
- Lustig: I know what you mean. Our feeling was that it was quite injurious. How do you evaluate a thing like that? It's guilt by association. How do you evaluate it? Do you turn these people away, people who are sincere, who believe in many of the same things that we believed in? Do we say, "No you can't become a part of our campaign. You can't support her." I don't know how you would handle that.
- Glaser: There was Catholic opposition, official Catholic-hierarchy opposition, in Los Angeles.
- Lustig: There was here too; we had evidence of it. We had very strong evidence of it. We had many Catholic people who were very strong for Helen Douglas and remained strong for Helen Douglas, who came in furious because they were instructed not to vote for her.
- Vince Whelan, who I think was the chairman of Jimmy Roosevelt's campaign, had been on our committee too, and is a very devout Catholic. He came in and told us that he had been over at St. Joseph's, which is a large downtown cathedral, (this was just before the election) that they had a ballot on a bulletin board or a very large blackboard and had marked it for Nixon against Helen.
- Yes, we had a lot of evidence that the Catholic Church was very strongly against her and were being very vocal about it.
- Glaser: How effective was this, do you think?
- Lustig: I have no way of knowing. Now, the Catholics who were on our committee and were working for us were very much incensed by it, but how effective it was amongst the Catholics in the county, I don't know.
- Glaser: And what about black voters? I understand that the Sentinel newspaper in Los Angeles came out against her, for Nixon, while Mary McLeod Bethune made an appearance on the West Coast for Mrs. Douglas.
- Lustig: Yes, she did.
- Glaser: How did this affect the local voters?

Lustig: I think the black people here were for Helen. Although the black community here was very poorly organized, we had some very effective black people on our committee. Bebe Banks, a dear soul who we loved dearly, was very effective in the black community. And we had several black people on our committee. Verna King, Mrs. Banks' daughter, Olga--

We had a dinner with some influential black people before Mary McLeod Bethune spoke at a black church in the southeast section here. The church was filled to overflowing and this, as I recall, was on a weekday night. And it wasn't easy, then especially, to get large crowds of black people because they worked early in the morning. Women who worked had to get up very early, get their kids off to school, take a bus (and the bus service wasn't the best) and get to work usually by 8 o'clock in the morning. So they didn't tend to go out to evening meetings during the week.

But this church was one of the largest in the black community, and it was totally filled. There was a black newspaper here, and we got good cooperation from them.

Glaser: What was the name of that paper?

Lustig: The Lighthouse; it changed hands several times and changed names. It was the only one here at the time.

Glaser: How damaging were the attacks against Mrs. Douglas by Senator Jack B. Tenney, the chairman of the California Un-American Activities Committee?

Lustig: I don't remember. Except that it would have to be important to the extent that it would contribute to multifaceted red-baiting.

Glaser: What do you remember about the Nixon techniques in this area? We understand there were something like 500,000 phone calls that were made--\*

Lustig: That's right.

Glaser: --right on the eve of the election. Did you receive one or did you know anybody who did?

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\* Maurice Revnes reported that (immediately after the election) a friend took a survey of the phone calls stating Helen Gahagan Douglas was a communist. Investigation showed that over 500,000 calls were made throughout the state. Letter to Helen Gahagan Douglas from Maurice Revnes, July 15, 1973.

Lustig: Yes, I know a lot of people who did and from that we gathered that they were just going down telephone books, that they weren't even calling Republicans, they were calling everybody. And it seemed to us, from the people who reported it to me and other members of our committee, that they must have just taken telephone books and assigned pages of telephone books to many, many, many people. I seem to recall that they had one office in particular that had a tremendous bank of telephones where they did nothing but telephone, telephone, telephone.

They were using a smear technique. It wasn't just the usual telephone call, "Are you going to vote, and if so, will you vote for so-and-so." But they were using a tricky sort of technique that was reported to me. I didn't personally get one, but then I was away most of the time anyway. "Oh, Mrs. Smith--or Jane or whatever--did you know that Helen Douglas is a communist?" And by the time Jane or Mrs. Smith could say, "Well, you must have the wrong number, I'm not Mrs. Smith," they would have already implanted that idea in their minds. And they they would say, "Well excuse me, I must have the wrong number," or something like that. Now, this was reported to me. I personally didn't get one.

Glaser: Were there things done to counteract this?

Lustig: This was right before the election.

Glaser: You had not time?

Lustig: No time. And how do you counteract a thing like that? By publicizing it you implant it in people's minds again. You're again on the defensive. And we couldn't get a whole bank of telephone pages and say, "That's not true."

#### More on Finances

Glaser: Who was doing the fund raising for you in this area?

Lustig: Well, we had a committee and some of these--what I call the old-line politicians--were the ones who were supposed to be collecting money, and they weren't doing it effectively. Armie Carter was our treasurer--And Grace Rittoff assistant-treasurer.

We had, as I say, a committee, and I don't recall everyone who was on it. But some of these people that I mentioned before, Burt Vaughn, D.G. Hamilton, all people who had been for Boddy before came in on this campaign.

Lustig: We finally got a public relations person who volunteered to come in on it. He has since died, a man by the name of Preston Justice. He is the one who composed an awfully good letter for it (and I sure wish I had a copy of it now) that we sent out to just people, Democrats. It was a letter that not only told a lot about Helen but asked them, as average citizens, as a grass roots thing, to send in anything that they could. And we did, we got a--Well, I forget what the percentage was, but he felt that it was a tremendously large percentage for that type of mailing.

And everyone that was on the committee begged anyone that we could to contribute. Then at various meetings we took up collections. It was all just penny ante stuff compared to the kind of money that was being spent.

Glaser: And you didn't get any Hollywood money from Beverly Hills?

Lustig: I don't think we got money. Now, I may be wrong about this. I'd have to see the treasurer's bankbook actually. I don't recall that we got money, but we did get things paid for, as I told you before. We got ads placed for us, and we got radio ads paid for, and we had enough money at the very end so that we tried to get her on every radio station the night before election. And I think we did--at the same time. We felt that no matter where they turned the dial they would hear her.

Glaser: Were these canned speeches?

Lustig: Yes. There was lack of communication and coordination from Los Angeles. At the last minute we heard L.A.--(or statewide) live coverage had been bought including some of the very stations we had already bought for canned speeches.

Glaser: Did you have any experience dealing with people who thought she was not a Democrat, that she was really a fellow-traveler? There was a pamphlet put out, "Is Helen Douglas a Democrat? The Record Says No." Was that passed around in your area? Was it effective?

Lustig: I don't recall that it was passed around. I don't recall that at all.

We had personal confrontations with many people, some of them pretty ugly. I myself, I had--My car was a traveling billboard. We had a very large billboard made, it might have been perhaps five feet long or as long as the roof of my car, and we had it put on professionally. I was sort of a traveling billboard, and there were several instances--Well, one that was very frightening where I was closed in on by two cars and I was really very frightened. There were several instances where I was forced over to the side

- Lustig: of the road by people who were that antagonistic to her. And many, many instances where there were epithets, usually on the theme of her being a communist or a fellow-traveler, that sort of thing. I considered those people extremists, you know. But some of them became frightening incidents.
- Glaser: Was Herb Klein in your area?
- Lustig: Well, I don't know when he became one of the editors of the Union, and I don't recall him in the area at that time. He became very prominent later, but whether he was writing editorials at that time for the Union, I don't know. They were certainly anti-Democratic enough for him to have been writing them.
- Glaser: Well, how effective was the Chotiner pamphlet, "One Democrat to Another?"
- Lustig: Well, we felt the things Chotiner was responsible for were probably the most effective of all here.
- Glaser: And then there was a Democrat named Creel who organized Democrats for Nixon.
- Lustig: I don't remember that. The name Creel doesn't--Oh, is he the one who was connected with Home Savings and Loan or one of the Savings and Loan?
- Glaser: I don't know that. In World War I he had been part of the unofficial cabinet for Wilson, perhaps a public relations man for him.
- Lustig: No, I don't recall the name.
- Glaser: What was the relationship on Mrs. Douglas's part with regard to Jimmy Roosevelt's campaign? There was some indication she was not wholeheartedly for him.
- Lustig: Yes, none of us were, really. We felt that Warren was a good governor. We felt that Jimmy was running a very ineffective campaign, that he really didn't have issues to run on. None of us felt very strongly for him. We didn't sabotage the campaign, certainly. As I told you, they moved in with us. We did what we could, but we didn't actually feel very strongly for him.
- Glaser: Was Mrs. Douglas's campaign hurt by his running, because of people who wanted to vote solid Democrat and yet didn't really want him?
- Lustig: We thought so; we felt that it was.



## Support from National Figures; Local Advisors

- Glaser: There were a lot of big wheels who came out from Washington to speak on her behalf. As much good as they could do her, was this also a detriment because it indicated her weakness?
- Lustig: We didn't have any indication of that, because that was the pattern. It still is the pattern, actually, where a lot of the Washington people come out and speak for candidates. No, we welcomed them. We didn't feel that that was a detriment in any way.
- Glaser: Can you remember the names of those who came here?
- Lustig: No, I don't recall.
- Glaser: Well, I have some names and you can tell me if you remember them. There was Averell Harriman.
- Lustig: A lot of these people came West but didn't think that San Diego was important enough, you know, and didn't come here.
- Glaser: Alban Barkley.
- Lustig: He didn't come.
- Glaser: Eleanor Roosevelt.
- Lustig: Yes, Eleanor Roosevelt came out.
- Glaser: J. Howard McGrath, the U.S. Attorney General.
- Lustig: I don't recall whether he did or not.
- Glaser: Maurice Tobin, he was secretary of labor.
- Lustig: I really don't--you go on, but I don't remember.
- Glaser: Charles Brannan, I think he was secretary of agriculture.
- Lustig: Well, Eleanor Roosevelt, of course, was a terribly important person who came out, but the others I don't recall. They may have come out, and some of them--The secretary of labor, possibly, went to labor groups. We had a lot of labor people with us, and a lot of the rank and file or labor were very strongly with us, very much so. Yes, we had strong labor backing here. The chairman of the Central Labor Committee was on our committee, Ed Reilly of the Teamsters Union, two very good workers from the Communications

Lustig: Workers Union, and several others. We were able to get many good union meetings organized. And at that time I think labor had more influence over the rank and file than they do now, in how they vote.

Glaser: In this area was the CIO red-baited?

Lustig: Yes, it was. We had CIO people working with us and perhaps this made a difference, but they were good people and good workers and very, very much--very strongly--for the same things that all of us were for. And we weren't going to say, "No, go away." But yes, we had a lot of CIO people with us.

Glaser: Did Nixon ever answer something that he could have been picked up on: the fact that he had voted against aid to Korea prior to the outbreak of the Korean War that year?

Lustig: In his speeches here?

Glaser: Mrs. Douglas leveled that charge against him, and I wondered whether he just ignored it or if he ever came to terms with it.

Lustig: I don't recall that he ever really spoke of it here at all. I don't recall that at all.

Glaser: When she campaigned, was there a difference in emphasis in how much time she gave to Northern versus Southern California?

Lustig: Well, when you say Southern California, you're including Los Angeles of course.

Glaser: Oh surely.

Lustig: I don't know, I don't recall at all that we ever evaluated that. We kept so busy ourselves. We worked right through the summer between the primary and the general. We kept our office open and had people down there working. We were working constantly and were ourselves so busy that I don't know that we ever stopped to evaluate how much time she was spending between the two. I think we just assumed that she was spending the most time where she was going to get the most votes. I imagine this was just an assumption on our part and we never questioned it. We were all pretty naive; we weren't professional politicians.

Glaser: Do you know who was the person that she leaned on the most for advice?

Lustig: Here?

Glaser: Yes.

[end tape 1, side B; begin tape 2, side A]

Glaser: Can you think of someone?

Lustig: I don't know of a person. I know that when she would come down we would have the most active people in our committee--as I say, we had a very large downtown office. We had coffee going there all the time for people who wanted to stop in, and we'd usually bring in sandwiches or something. If she were coming down it was during the day, and we always managed to have a meeting with her prior to whatever we had arranged for her.

We would run her around from one place to another; it was fantastic the stamina that she had. But we always managed to have the inner circle of our committee meet with her, and it was there that policy matters, and so forth, would be discussed.

Now, included in that group would be Byron Lindsley, and I think she respected his opinion greatly; my husband, who was very active in the campaign; Louise Darby; Grace Rittoff; [thinking it over carefully] Van Deerlin. There may have been more. At least those people--all of us working terribly hard, devoting practically all of our time to her campaign. I think it was more or less a little group like that from whom she would ask advice.

Glaser: Did she have a manager for Southern California?

Lustig: (Pause) I would presume so. Perhaps it was Melvyn's brother. Perhaps that was his designation, because he's the one that came down. And then her secretary,--

Glaser: Was that Evie Chavoor?

Lustig: Yes, Evie Chavoor.

Glaser: Can you suggest any questions we ought to ask Evie Chavoor?

Lustig: A lot of these questions I can't answer she might be able to, because we were in contact a great deal by telephone.

Glaser: Was she in Washington or in Los Angeles?

Lustig: She was for the most part, I believe, in Los Angeles, if my memory serves me right.

Glaser: Where is she now?

Lustig: She is the administrative assistant or secretary to some other congressman, I believe. Helen [Douglas] knows.

- Glaser: Does the name Harold Tipton ring a bell?
- Lustig: It rings a bell but I can't recall why. The name somehow seems familiar to me.
- Glaser: I think that he was the campaign coordinator perhaps in the north.
- Lustig: Possibly so. We really had no contact with the northern part; it was as though it were a different state. We personally, here in San Diego, had no contact with them.
- Glaser: Does the name Susie Clifton ring a bell?
- Lustig: Yes, Susie Clifton came down a couple of times. I don't recall whether she came down on her own or whether she came with Helen.
- Glaser: What was the role she played?
- Lustig: She seemed to be very close to the campaign. She seemed to be perhaps an advisor. She seemed to be a very important part of the campaign, but exactly in what role I don't remember.
- Glaser: Did veterans play any part in the campaign?
- Lustig: No.
- Glaser: Was there a chapter of the ADA here?\*
- Lustig: Yes, but a very, very small, very quiet chapter. They've never been very active here, and most people aren't even aware that there ever was a chapter here. There isn't at the present time.
- We did contact the man who was the most active in the ADA here and he was helpful. I don't remember his name now, but I remember he worked in a clothing store right here in Ocean Beach. He gave us mailing lists and names and things like that. But there wasn't ever an active chapter of ADA here.
- Glaser: There was an editorial in a Minneapolis newspaper, I'm not sure exactly when in the campaign--either in October or September--having to do with Nixon's dirty tricks. I wonder if use was made of that.
- Lustig: I can't recall that editorial specifically, but we did try to make

---

\* Americans for Democratic Action, a liberal political group formed after World War II.

Lustig: use of whatever knowledge we had. We tried our darnedest to make use of it. We couldn't get very much. We couldn't get publicity on it. But in whatever way we possibly could, we spread the word and we gave proof, whatever proof we had.

#### Campaign Conduct in Hindsight

Glaser: If you had a chance to redo that campaign, what would you do differently?

Lustig: Oh my, that's quite a question. [Long pause] I think that in light of what we now know about Nixon, I think we would have made a much stronger campaign against him. We tried to keep our campaign on as high a level as we could.

We felt so strongly about Helen and the things that she stood for, that this is the thing that we wanted to stress. We wanted people to understand what she could do for us if she got to the Senate. We wanted people to understand her idealism, her honesty, everything that was good about her. So we tried to make it a very positive campaign. I'm not so sure that we wouldn't try to also show the kind of person that Nixon is.

Glaser: You had not done that?

Lustig: I don't think we did it as strongly as we should have. Perhaps if we had had more money and more media available we could have developed a better campaign against Nixon. I think that we were just too idealistic ourselves to do that.

The night that Nixon resigned, one of the TV channels came out here (they did the same thing with whoever it was that managed the Nixon campaign here at the same time), and we all listened to the Nixon speech together. Then they wanted to know what my reaction to it was. And my immediate and honest reaction was: he hasn't changed a bit. He's just exactly the same now as he was then. I think in view of what has happened that I would try to emphasize that aspect of it.

Of course, hindsight is easy. But I think we tried so hard and we had such faith in the principles for which she stood, that we tried hard to make people understand this. It was like, "If we could just shake it into them." I think this was the thrust of our campaign.

Glaser: Did you feel desperate or did you feel that things were going well despite all the red-baiting?

Lustig: I think we felt desperate towards the end. When she won the primary, we were just riding high. We thought there's just no way she could lose. People really understood this person, and this was just going to be great! We were really going to get people who understood what it was that she stood for. But as the campaign went on, we could see what was happening. And we tried not to, we blinded ourselves to a lot of things. As I say, perhaps if we hadn't done that we could have come out stronger against Nixon, instead of coming out as strongly as we did for Helen.

Glaser: If you had had more money could you have been more effective, or didn't that really play a role?

Lustig: At the time we felt that we were desperate for money, that we needed more money. Yes, if we had had more money we probably could have used it effectively. I don't know that it would have made that much difference, to be perfectly honest. It was, as I say, a very, very reactionary area, and I don't know but what the red-baiting was effective. And I think the more money we would have spent, the more money they would have spent and perhaps made it even worse for her.

Glaser: I've come across a statement by Chotiner that Helen Gahagan Douglas made an initial error in trying to attack Nixon's strength, and that you must never do that to a candidate, you must attack his weaknesses. Was that apparent to you, or do you think that is a justified statement?

Lustig: His strengths in his voting record or the areas where he was strong, or what did he mean by that?

Glaser: Yes, I think the voting record.

Lustig: [Pause] Well, I don't know whether that's true or not because I don't know what Chotiner considered were his strengths in his voting record. As I recall, she did attack his voting record. But there always seemed to be the pressing need to defend her record against his attacks, so she never could gain the offensive position.

Glaser: If I'm wrong and it isn't the voting record, if it's his way of campaigning, would that give that statement a different aspect?

Lustig: I really don't think that we did that here. I think that Chotiner's statement as a general rule probably has great merit, but I can't recall whether it was done here or whether we were aware that this was what she was doing state-wide.

Glaser: In reading about the campaign one gets the impression that nothing effective was done, that there was no idea of how to really come to grips with the red-baiting that she and the rank and file workers were just steam-rolled and kind of befuddled--you know, "What hit us?"

Lustig: I think that's true, that we were just sort of reaching out for something we could really focus in on and really be effective. But there was so much that was hitting us, that we were going off in all directions. I think that this was probably true state-wide. It was hitting us in so many ways and so many areas, that what do you focus in on, which one of these do you focus in on and become effective?

Glaser: Here's a statement by Professor Harry Girvitz that I'd like your reaction to: "Helen's line was the only intelligent line: that the indiscriminate attack was making it difficult to identify the real Communists."

Lustig: I would say that's probably true, that in the cloud that they were creating with all of this activity nobody knew what is or isn't a real Communist. A pink paper represented a Communist to the general public. And I have no doubt that a lot of us who were never Communists but who were liberals were smeared with that same brush at that time. Even amongst some Democrats I'm sure we were considered pro-Communist at the minimum.

Glaser: There's another statement I want your reaction to. It appeared in New Republic: that she was too often talking to those who were already for her and couldn't reach the other kind.

Lustig: I think that's true, because those who were for her were very faithful and were very much for her and would hand on every word. They'd go to every meeting; they'd read everything she said.

But how do you reach the others and how do you know whether you're reaching the others or not? The meetings that we had for her here were very successful numerically, but I have no doubt that a lot of them were people who were already for her. In the first place, she had been an actress, she was the wife of a very popular actor, and I think there was a certain amount of that--just like the politicians today will have actors on their committees, and so forth. Or when they're going to appear, they have these people come. A lot of people go just to see them. We didn't recognize at that time that this might be true, but I think it probably was, just to see her.

Glaser: Did you have any indication subsequent to the '50 campaign that she favored Eisenhower over Truman? Do you know how she felt about Mr. Truman?

Lustig: No, I don't know at all.

### Present Day Activities

Glaser: I think that that pretty much covers the 1950 campaign. I'd like to know what you're doing now. Obviously you're not inactive because you recently went to a weekend conference in Los Angeles.

Lustig: Well, that was not a political conference. My main activity right now is--I was in business, my husband and I had a computerized business bookkeeping and tax service called "Mail-Me-Monday." I continued the business, after his death, for several years, then sold it, retaining only a minor interest and retiring from active participation. It is now called Business Advisors Inc. After I retired I started doing volunteer work. I helped form what we call "Call for Action." You have it, I think, in Los Angeles. It's an ombudsman-type of program that's sponsored by a TV station.

But at the present time my main activity is working on behalf of the U.S.-China People's Friendship Association. I had the opportunity to go to China, and it was a very moving experience for me and a tremendous education. I feel very, very strongly that unless the people of the United States and the people of China understand each other and are friends with each other, we're in trouble. After all, one out of every four people in the world is Chinese, and from a practical standpoint I think we darned well better be friends.

But I was very, very much impressed with the people of China, and I would like very much for the people of the United States to get to know the people of China and vice versa.

Glaser: When was your trip?

Lustig: It was exactly two years ago, in November of 1974.

Glaser: You were one of the early ones. Did you go in a group?

Lustig: There were twenty-two of us.

Glaser: How did you manage this?

Lustig: Through the U.S.-China People's Friendship Association. We considered it a tremendous privilege, because they just weren't geared for visitors and it was a--well, we got to see everything, every aspect of their life, their economy, everything else. It was a



- Lustig: very, very intensive tour, and we got to meet people. Of course, there's always a language barrier, but there were several people in our group who spoke Chinese fluently. So we knew we were getting honest questions and honest answers.
- Glaser: Well, you must be watching the current situation very closely.\*
- Lustig: Very, very closely, yes. Like many other people I'm puzzled by a lot of what's going on, and I'm just hoping that their goal of an egalitarian society, which seemed to be almost at the point of accomplishment there, and their goal of helping each other, I hope that this is going to be continued. This was the thing that was so impressive, so terribly impressive to us, and I just hope that this is going to remain their goal.
- Glaser: Speaking of China reminds me of the China lobby. Was Senator Knowland down here during the campaign working against Mrs. Douglas?
- Lustig: Whether he was actually here or not I don't recall, but he certainly must have been working against her because this would be within his philosophy. And he had a tremendous number of followers here, people who thought he was just tremendous, of course.
- Glaser: But you are not aware that he was actually here.
- Lustig: I don't recall that he was here personally.
- Glaser: There are a couple of men that I wanted to ask you about who would be Republicans but from this area. There's a man named Arbuthnot.
- Lustig: I don't recognize the name.
- Glaser: Arnholt Smith? He's from San Diego.
- Lustig: Oh yes, yes indeed he is, he's our famous citizen now [chuckling.]
- Glaser: And his brother John?
- Lustig: I think he is still chairman of the Del Mar racetrack.
- Glaser: Were they active in the '50 campaign?
- Lustig: Well, Arnholt Smith never became active. He worked behind the scenes. What he did actually was contribute money. As you know, he was Nixon's largest contributor. But he would play both ends against the middle.

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\* Succession to position of Mao Tse-tung following his death.

- Lustig: He had more or less a flunky here by the name of [John] Alessio, who subsequently has served time in jail for income tax evasion. Alessio was a registered Democrat, so that we became aware--I don't think it was so much in the Douglas campaign that we became aware of this, but it was in the Stevenson campaign that we became aware--that where Arnholt Smith was contributing money to the Republican party in lesser but still sizeable amounts, Alessio was contributing money to the Democratic campaign. So that they covered all bases.
- Glaser: And the Alessio money was really from Mr. Smith?
- Lustig: Yes, they were very much intertwined. And as a matter of fact, yes, they had many, many intertwining corporations. It was all out of the same pot.
- Glaser: There are some names that I want to check with you. You didn't give me your husband's first name.
- Lustig: Well, his first name was Myron, but he was always called Mike. He was known as Mike Lustig.
- Glaser: And you mentioned a Mr. Noonan.
- Lustig: You know, I can't remember his first name. I think it was Bob, but if you ever talk to Van Deerlin, who is our congressman--not from this district, but in San Diego, he'd probably remember a lot about the campaign, and he'd probably remember who from the old San Diego Journal came over to our campaign.
- Glaser: There's something else that I wanted to question you about since you raised Mr. Van Deerlin's name. I think that Judge Lindsley mentioned to Mrs. Fry that there had been Douglas money left over from the campaign that was used for Mr. Van Deerlin's campaign.
- Lustig: Yes.
- Glaser: How could there have been money left over if you were scraping the barrel?
- Lustig: Well, there wasn't very much, there was very little left over. You had asked whether that total immersion of the radio stations that night before the election was canned. Now I won't swear to this, but I think this is what happened: we had already planned for that radio time and were going to put on a canned speech. Then we received word at the last minute that she was going to give a talk and time had been purchased state-wide. I think this is how we had some money left, as I recall. So we polled the committee afterwards, it seems to me. Maybe Byron [Lindsley] remembers that more accurately than I do; I had forgotten about that. I think that Armie Carter was the treasurer of our committee.

Glaser: And you were the executive secretary?

Lustig: Yes.

Glaser: Who was the over-all chairman, Judge Lindsley?

Lustig: Judge Lindsley.

Glaser: You said your committee covered San Diego County and Imperial County too. Was this committee, with Mr. Carter and Judge Lindsley, for both San Diego city and county?

Lustig: We made no distinction between city and county.

Glaser: I'm going to leave now to talk to Judge Lindsley and I thank you very, very much.

Lustig: Oh, you're very welcome; it's a pleasure. I wish I could have been more helpful.

[Taping resumed as Mrs. Lustig discusses committee members]

Glaser: You're mentioning Gladys Coit as a worker?

Lustig: As a worker and a person who not only worked herself but was able to bring other people in to work.

Glaser: So you considered her a member of the committee.

Lustig: She probably was, but she wouldn't have been a vocal member of the committee or a policy-making member. She wasn't that kind; she was just a good worker.

Glaser: Henry Cramer--what was his role?

Lustig: He was a member of the committee. He was a member of the men's Democratic Club, which was the counterpart of the League of Democratic Women. The Men's Democratic Club was really the fundraiser for all campaigns and the policy maker for the Democrats here. They were the people who were elected year after year to the Democratic central committee here.

Glaser: Okay. Mr. D.G. Hamilton?

Lustig: D.G. Hamilton was the "Mr. Democrat."

Glaser: Go on to the next names.

[Mrs. Lustig refers to list of names she has compiled of 1950 campaign committee]

Lustig: David Feldman, who was a student at that time, and Marlene Jones--

Glaser: And you mentioned that they later married.

Lustig: Yes.

Glaser: Who else?

Lustig: Grace Rittoff. Lionel Van Deerlin. Vincent Whelan, Sr. Armistead Carter. Bertram Vaughn (his son is now a judge here) was a very active person on the committee. There were a couple of black women and I can't remember their names. They're both dead. Another black woman who was not as active but was a part of the campaign was Verna King. Some of the CIO people.

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Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Alvin Meyers

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND THE CAMPAIGNS FOR CONGRESS

An Interview Conducted by  
Ingrid Winther Scobie  
in 1978

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ALVIN P. MEYERS





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Alvin P. Meyers contributes, in this interview, detailed insights into Helen Gahagan Douglas's campaigns on the district level for 1944-1950 and statewide for the 1950 campaign. His articulate recollections of the climate of opinion, the decision-making process within her campaign organization, and Douglas's relationship to key Democrats in California and Washington, are invaluable for analyzing the considerable campaign materials in the Douglas Collection at the University of Oklahoma and the Lybeck Collection at the University of California, Los Angeles. The information is particularly useful for unraveling questions about the 1950 Senate campaign, such as Douglas's decision to run, her perception of strategy, and the shortcomings of her organization.

Meyers' experience in the California Democratic party began in the early 1930s when he helped organize the Young Democrats. He became part of the small circle surrounding Congressman Thomas Ford, serving as Ford's public relations man. In 1944, when Ford decided to retire and selected Douglas as his choice for a replacement, Meyers took on the job of treasurer for the Douglas campaign. He continued as treasurer through 1950. More importantly, he, along with Ruth and Ed Lybeck, Susie Clifton, and a few others, formed the small, loyal, and dedicated group in Los Angeles that played an important role in advising Douglas. Meyers became personally close to the Douglas family as did most of those who worked closely with the congresswoman.

This uninterrupted two-hour interview took place, March 23, 1978, in Meyers' handsome, wood-paneled office at B'nai B'rith headquarters in Los Angeles where he volunteers his time. The tone of the interviews was formal but friendly. During the follow-up editing period, Meyers became increasingly involved with the whole interviewing process. His concern for detail and organization and his determination for historical accuracy, permeates the interview text. Although Meyers clearly admired Douglas and felt deep affection for her, his desire for objectivity is also evident, which adds credibility to this interview.

Ingrid Winther Scobie  
Interviewer-Editor

8 October 1980  
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## VIII HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND THE CAMPAIGNS FOR CONGRESS

[Interview 1: March 23, 1978]  
 [begin tape 1, side A]

Helen Gahagan Douglas: 1944 Congressional Candidate

Meyers: A number of liberal Democrats were elected to Congress in the several years previous to 1946 which was the year of [Richard] Nixon's appearance on the scene. I can think of Franck [R.] Havenner in San Francisco, Edouard [V.M.] Izac in San Diego, George [E.] Outland in Santa Barbara, Jerry Voorhis in East Los Angeles County. But of the entire group of Democrats that was elected previous to '46, Helen was almost the only survivor. Every one of them was knocked out of Congress. That was not symptomatic of Nixon's efforts. It was the climate. The climate began with the McCarthy type of rationale if you want to call it that or dignify it by calling it that. It was an off year and there was a lot of money around that was against it and, as I say, Helen was virtually the only survivor.

Meyers: Early Years with the Young Democrats

Meyers: Anyway, to give you a little background on how I got involved with Helen, I was one of the four founders of the Young Democrats of California. This goes back to '31 or '32.

Scobie: Who were the other founders?

Meyers: Harold (we called him Hal) Slane, David Gill, Henry Fisher, and myself. We were in a very peculiar position because previous to the Roosevelt-Hoover campaign, California was riddled with factions. There was the [John] Dockweiler faction, headed by Isidore B. Dockweiler, California Democratic National Committeeman for sixteen years until he was unseated by [William Gibbs] McAdoo at the '32

Meyers: convention. They were pledged to Al Smith. Isidore Dockweiler was father of John, later district attorney and still later congressman from the 16th Congressional District. Then there was the F.D. Roosevelt faction headed by J.F.T. O'Connor, later a federal district judge. And finally there was the John N. Garner group headed by William Gibbs McAdoo, former secretary of the treasury under Woodrow Wilson. The warfare was internecine--and deadly. Anyway the Garner slate, supported by the three Hearst papers in the state, won in the primaries after a rugged battle.

Thus, when F.D.R. came to California, the Young Democrats played host to him. He didn't dare appear under the auspices of any of the three rival groups for fear of antagonizing the other two, in fact alienating them completely. We took him at Santa Barbara after he came down the coast, and I did the publicity for his trip through Southern California and we put on quite a show. As a result, most of us who were young at the time, met the important people in the party. Some of them liked us and some of them didn't, but we were not just an offshoot of or an adjunct to the senior party as was true in most states where the Young Democrats were tolerated. They were the go-fors. We were an entity.

We had wound up with 104 active clubs throughout the state. We were a real force. As a matter of fact, I would say that 20% of your federal brigade in this state today came from those old Young Democrats. There are also two members of the supreme court out of the state who were Young Democrats at that time.

Scobie: This was '31, '32.

Meyers: Yes, but mostly it was active in '32. We were forming in '31. It was a proposition of "anybody but Hoover."

Scobie: Did these clubs have any relation to the later Democratic club movement which began in '54?

Meyers: By that time the Young Democrats as I knew them were vestiges. We were all middle-aged by '54.

The activity led me to a lot of people. Eventually I went with the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] and I was, as I say, technically "hatched" from '35 until I left the IRS in '47, but I surreptitiously kept a finger in.

Scobie: Why were you "hatched?"

Meyers: That was the law. You were not allowed to play politics as a federal officer. Oh, you could belong to a political organization or club, but you couldn't hold office and God forbid if you tried to raise money for a candidate. It was your job at stake.

Meyers: In 1936, the Young Democrats staged the very first of what was then known as the Jackson Day Dinners. Today it's the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner. We had almost 1400 people at the Ambassador. It was the kick-off of the Roosevelt-Garner reelection campaign. But one thing led to another and in the course of this activity I met Mrs. Douglas and I met Ed and Ruth Lybeck and Susie [Clifton] and many others.

Scobie: Helen was not involved in politics.

Meyers: Yes, she was in a peripheral way. She was involved in liberal activities. She and Mel had gone up to Kern County to the migratory workers camp and Mel was active at that time as a much younger man in Hollywood.

Scobie: That began, I think, in '37 or '38.

Meyers: It could have been a little bit later, but what I mean is that there was a liberal focal point. I had spent quite a little time in the studios and I was with the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League and all of the so-called fringe organizations without ever having been a member of the Communist party or even wanting to be from that day to this. Mel did the same type of thing. He was in HICCASP [Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions] as I recall.

Now, I had been active with Tom [Thomas F.] Ford. As a matter of fact, I had done his public relations. He had been a councilman in the city of Los Angeles and I had had no contact with him at that time. Then by a very freak set of circumstances under our California election law, he became a candidate for Congress. Here I have to ask you a question. Are you familiar at all with the old crossfiling law?

Scobie: Yes.

Meyers: Well, the man who won the Democratic nomination was a Republican who lost his own which immediately eliminated him as the Democratic candidate. The result was that the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee could name a candidate, and as Ford had been a very successful campaigner for the council, they named him.

Scobie: When did you do PR work for him?

Meyers: Only when he became a congressional candidate, which was in '34. Now this was before I went with IRS. Afterwards I kept very close to the Fords and there was a sort of an inner cabinet of Tom and Lillian Ford and Margaret Farrell and Larry Healy and myself. When it came time for Tom to retire because he was getting along in age, and also because

Meyers: he was a very feisty character and I think pressure got to him a little bit, he conceived the idea that we should run Helen Douglas in his place.

Now, the old 14th Congressional District had Figueroa Street practically in the middle of it. West of Figueroa to Hoover was our "blue blood" district, if you can conceive that. East of Figueroa was strictly a lower economic area, and there was quite a lot of question about whether Helen would be an acceptable candidate. She was a Hollywood actress. She was a blue blood. She was in the money, and she was just not the kind of candidate that that district would be expected to go for.

Scobie: Why did Tom come up with her?

Meyers: Very, very impressed with Helen. They were very close, especially Lillian and Helen, and everybody admired Helen. Ford thought this might be an extremely good jumping off point, a place to get her feet wet, you might say. He suggested it, and it fell on sympathetic ears in a lot of quarters and on very enthusiastic in others, among them the Lybecks and myself and Susie Clifton.

#### Campaign Strategy

Meyers: There was a meeting in what is now the Roosevelt building downtown on Seventh Street in a private office; a meeting of Ruth, Ed, Helen herself, and myself, and I'm not sure Susie was there. As a matter of fact, I don't think she was. I know that Tom wasn't there because we wanted to really kick this around without him.

There was a lot of discussion about how we could sell this silk stocking candidate on the wrong side of the tracks. I made the point--and it was I who did it (and I don't want this "I" to go running all through this because I wasn't that pivotal)--that there were three influential papers in Los Angeles at the time that covered the district we were interested in: the Los Angeles Times, the Los Angeles Examiner, and what was at one time known as the Illustrated Daily News and later known as the Daily News.

Scobie: Manchester Boddy's paper.

Meyers: Boddy's paper. I said, "If we can get any one of the three of them we can nominate her and then if we can get any one of the three to support her, we can elect her." Well, we got the Daily News. Boddy went along. We ran strictly an economic campaign.



Scobie: What do you mean by economic?

Meyers: On one side of Figueroa the campaign was pitched to the unions and the workers and on the other side of Figueroa to the wealthy or at least the well-to-do. I don't want to give you the impression that this was a cynical campaign. It stressed different issues. You always emphasize different things in different places and at different times.

Scobie: I've got a campaign sheet here from '44. I'd like you to take a look at it.

Meyers: Where did you get these materials?

Scobie: Different places. I am writing a biography of Douglas so I have been to the University of Oklahoma and have copies of some materials.

Meyers: Oklahoma's got the best.

Scobie: They have her papers, plus I have been through the Lybeck papers.

Meyers: Did Sharon [Lybeck] give you the Lybeck papers?

Scobie: They are at UCLA in the Special Collections department.

Meyers: Oh, they are? I didn't know that.

Scobie: Oh, yes, they are quite extensive. It's been some time since I looked at those. Then her interview at Berkeley has now been transcribed. Now, you were talking about an economic campaign.

Meyers: Anyway, I forget what the name of her Republican opponent--it is an Irish name.

Scobie: Here are all the people who ran on the primary against her.

Meyers: Bill [William D.] Campbell was the eventual candidate. Yes, you can see that.

Scobie: [Gives Meyers some papers] Here are the election statistics.

Meyers: G. Vernon Bennett later became a councilman. Well you see, we won fairly handily in the primary. Loren Miller was, I'm sure you know, black and later became a judge. An excellent, tremendous guy. [Pause] It was sort of a squeak in the final election, wasn't it?

Scobie: The first time around, yes. By '48 she really won hands down.

Meyers: I know.

Well, now that you've got this, let me tell you something. To go back to that first point we were talking about, George Outland was defeated in '46, Voorhis in '46, Ned [R.] Healy was defeated in '46, Ellis Patterson was defeated in '46, but not Cecil [R.] King.

Scobie: Yes, Cecil King kept on and so did Chet Holifield.

Meyers: Yes, Chet [Chester E.] Holifield kept on until he got tired. Clyde Doyle kept on, by the way. Clyde did, Chet did.

Scobie: Yes, I just talked to him this morning, as a matter of fact.

Meyers: Who?

Scobie: Chet Holifield.

Meyers: How is he?

Scobie: He sounded fine, he sounded good. I'm going to be talking with him one of these days.

Meyers: Harry [R.] Sheppard, of course, kept on. John Phillips was a Republican. Ed Izac and Franck Havenner were the other ones who were defeated.

Scobie: That's quite a handful.

Meyers: Oh, it was almost a clean sweep.

In any event, the thing that was done in these congressional campaigns and this was done noticeably in '46 and '48, more so than in '44 when she was an outsider you might say, was that we conducted a home meeting type campaign. People would invite their neighbors in and we would set up maybe three a night or maybe as many as four a night and pay for the cookies and hire the chairs and she'd go from one to the other.

We carried that through, by the way, years later in Jimmy Roosevelt's campaigns for Congress. We tied in very closely and paid for most of the advertising, joint advertising, with the Democratic assemblymen in the district. There were four Democratic assemblymen in those districts.

Scobie: Right. The districts were the 64th, the 55th, the 44th, and the 62nd.

Meyers: The 62nd was [Augustus] Hawkins.

Scobie: Yes, that was the black district.

Meyers: Yes. The 55th I think was Vernon Kilpatrick.

Scobie: Yes, I think it was too. I interviewed him once, a sweet person.

Meyers: The 64th along about that time was Sam Yorty. Now, he may not have lasted much longer after that. What was the other one?

Scobie: I think Yorty was out in '40 because he ran for the Senate, and he didn't come back in until '49.

Meyers: Well, Tom Ford put Yorty in the Assembly the first time.

Scobie: Why?

Meyers: Tom and John Baumgartner, whose name is on here, were tremendously strong pro-municipal ownership of the Water and Power Department which was being attacked very heavily by private utility companies, private water companies. The Times was a very strong municipal ownership paper because it was Harry Chandler who brought water to Los Angeles.

In any event, Sam was an employee of the Water and Power Department and I think if you dropped a pin on a plush cushion it made enough noise for Sam to say, "Mr. Chairman." [Laughter] He was very good on his feet and he was very presentable at the time and they picked him and just put him on the 64th district ballot.

Scobie: That must have been '38 because he became conservative in '40.

Meyers: He went completely conservative, and before Ed Lybeck came into Helen's campaign, he and a man by the name of Les Mailer formed a group that beat Sam. Sam had put together the "Little Dies" committee which was a witch-hunting aggregation, pure and simple.

Scobie: That's right and then Jack Tenney took over.

Meyers: Anyway, we made that decision on the basis of a very cold-blooded appraisal. If we could not get one of those three papers, she was not going to run because you just couldn't buck a coalition of that kind. Boddy represented the liberal forces and did an excellent job at doing so while the Times-Examiner and Herald Express were conservative as hell.

She won and, of course, she became fairly prominent and survived the '46 campaign and ran away with the '48 campaign. Along the line, as I recall it, she was twice a speaker at Democratic conventions.  
[Tape interruption: telephone]

Scobie: Before we go on to the '50 campaign, I'd like to ask you some more questions on the earlier campaigns. First of all, why do you think Boddy was willing to buy her as a candidate?

Meyers: [Reads list of names from primary election returns] Outside of Loren Miller who had status in the black district and G. Vernon Bennett who even then was beginning to be a doddering sort of fossil --but who later, oddly enough, became a pretty good councilman--there was no one you could really latch onto among the Democrats. Boddy was not at all averse to supporting Helen. Her record in liberal causes and the fact that she was extremely presentable and damn good looking and a good talker and a good salesman attracted him. Besides she was not the usual run of office seeker.

Scobie: What do you mean by that?

Meyers: She could sell herself to you.

Scobie: What did she use to sell herself?

Meyers: Well, she had a lot of beliefs about the way things should run and the way things should be done and some of them eventually cost her the '50 election. But at that time they were more or less the same kind of thing that Boddy championed.

Scobie: How did Helen respond to all this interest in her as a candidate?

Meyers: I think she was beginning to feel that she had something to say and that she would like to spread it around. This was before she became a driven person. This was before she took the bit between her teeth and irrespective of what anybody thought, what she thought should be done, she espoused.

For example, I don't want to jump to the '50 campaign but there were violent schisms in the Democratic party in the '50 campaign that had nothing to do with Nixon, nothing at all except that they redounded to his benefit. She became a little bit myopic by the time the '50 campaign rolled around because she thought that if she latched onto an issue, that everybody else was automatically interested in it, believed in it, and wanted to hear about, and of course that wasn't so.

If you want to jump for a minute to '50, I can tell you that she was resoundingly defeated by Nixon but part of it was her own fault. She asked for trouble. She asked for trouble, a little bit unnecessarily.

Scobie: Why don't we lead up to that?

Meyers: All right. As I did say, I think she spoke at two Democratic conventions during her tenure in office in Congress.

Scobie: She was nominated for vice-president in '48, so she talked there.

Meyers: Yes, I know. That was easy. Those nominations were empty gestures, like the one for Barbara Jordan. Those have no substance.

Scobie: They are symbolic of something, though, that's going on.

Meyers: Of course. Somebody has to take the time to get up and make a nomination speech and certainly has to have given it some thought.

Scobie: Let me ask you, back to the Lybecks, I'd like to get a little bit more detail. Why were they involved with the Fords and in politics?

#### Ed and Ruth Lybeck: An Evaluation

Meyers: Well, they actually were not involved so much with the Fords. The Ford's campaign manager was Larry Healy. The Lybecks came aboard in '44 for Helen's first campaign and really got to know the Fords then. For a long time, Ed was an employee of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and because of its rules, wasn't supposed to do any politicking.

Ruth, on the other hand, was free to do as she pleased, and she did exactly that. There was a strong vein of Scandinavian liberalism in her, in both of them for that matter. I suppose some people would call it socialism of the Norwegian variety. In any event, Ruth would get knee deep into one campaign or other and often had top level titles, but back of Ruth there was always Ed.

Scobie: Was he a good campaign manager?

Meyers: He was an extremely good one.

Scobie: In what way?

Meyers: I was going to say in a sort of analytical way he could put his finger on the key issue or the most appealing line of preservation. Now, my statement to you about the economic campaign in the old 14th district and the demarcation at Figueroa was Ed's thinking. That was based on Ed and I readily agreed because it was essentially the right kind of analysis. The house meetings that were devised were not only devised by Ed, they were put in motion by Ed and

Meyers: Ruth as well as the formula for working them. The idea of tying closely to the Democratic assemblymen in the different districts was, I would say, a combination of Ed and myself but more Ed than myself.

Scobie: Can you describe how that really functioned?

Meyers: That functioned extremely well. What happened was that in every district there was a main headquarters and the Democratic headquarters had signs such as "Helen Douglas for Congress--So-and-So for Senate;" "Helen Douglas for Congress--Vernon Kilpatrick for the Assembly," et cetera, et cetera, and we would pay most of the expenses and practically all of the advertising.

Scobie: Was this done in all the four assembly districts?

Meyers: Yes. Now that carried over, believe it or not, to other campaigns. Jim Roosevelt decided to run for Congress in '54, but he didn't live in the district [the 26th]. By that time I was free for politics as I had my own practice. I knew Lester McMillan very well who was the incumbent assemblyman in the 61st district and he called me up and he said, "Al, for God's sake, what are you doing to me?" This came right on the heels of a terrible scandal in Jim Roosevelt's family. He had written his wife, Romelle, a letter that he had slept with eleven women in Hawaii, and we knew he was going to get pulverized in the press. But I said, "Les, you haven't seen the kind of campaign we run." Of course, as a result of the campaign he became a convert because we ran a hell of a good campaign. Lybeck was an expert. I would take him on for anything, up to and including the mayoralty because he knew the city, he knew the districts, he knew the people.

Scobie: How did he get to know the city so well?

Meyers: Because during the Depression we all did a lot of things if we wanted to eat regularly. He did a lot of things, as I did a lot of things, and he got into politics as a way of getting on a payroll. Now, cut this off for a moment because I want to tell you something. [Tape interruption]

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

Meyers: However, outside Los Angeles he was lost. He was lost in San Francisco; he was lost in Sacramento. He had never had statewide experience. I had had state experience through the Young Democrats to an extent, at least in several campaigns. I had become publicity director for the State Democratic Central Committee when Culbert Olson was the state chairman before he became governor.

Meyers: But to go back to your question, Ed was a helluva good campaigner, and I enjoyed working with him. We respected each other and he was, as I say, eminently capable of running a congressional campaign and we ran the later ones together.

#### Campaigning by Neighborhoods

Scobie: These home meetings, how did he go about getting people who would have a meeting in a house?

Meyers: Actually, it was more Ruth than Ed with respect to these meetings. It would be a chain reaction. You would get a volunteer and if someone said, "Is there something I can do?" you would go, "Yes, do you have a patio; do you have a home; do you have a living room; will you ask your neighbors to come in? We'll supply you the chairs and we'll bring the cookies and make coffee." And one of those would set off another.

Scobie: She had so many different kinds of people in the lower class areas. She had Little Tokyo, she had Philippine groups, she had a huge group of Mexican-Americans. Would she touch on all these groups?

Meyers: Let me say that I think you're looking at the wrong end of the telescope. The Philippines group was minuscule.

Scobie: Right, but the Mexican-American group was big.

Meyers: Yes and no. You're thinking of the Mexican-American group in that congressional district today, but it wasn't that way in '44. Boyle Heights was still largely Jewish in '44. The Mexicans had not yet taken over completely. When the Jews moved out of Temple Street and Boyle Heights, mostly they moved to the West Adams district, and then the Mexicans followed in. They were not as strong in '44 as they are today.

Scobie: Now the Jewish group, what economic level were they? All levels?

Meyers: No, at that time they were no different from anybody else that was struggling. If they lived there, they were struggling, and of course there were successful people among them. Typically there was a gradual exodus. The more affluent ones moved first and then they were followed, and as the Mexicans entered, or in a few cases blacks moved in. For instance, in what became the 26th district, it was the blacks who followed the Jews into the West Adams district, that whole West Adams district that began with Western Avenue and Adams and even east to Figueroa Street and Adams had been the home then of

- Meyers: big wealth. The Jews moved in on the west side of it and then when they moved out, the blacks moved in. There was no transition from Mexican to black. Helen's 14th district ran, as I recall, to Exposition Boulevard which included Adams east of Figueroa.
- Scobie: It starts on Hollywood in the east-northwest corner. Then through a large home-owning district, through a big apartment area, through the Wilshire district, civic center, picked up downtown. Then she did indicate (this is Helen's description) that she had a heavy Spanish-speaking area, China City, Little Tokyo, and then into the 56th and the 62nd.
- Meyers: Let me tell you this, that there was a fairly sizeable Chinatown but a very small Japanese area. Little Tokyo was practically nothing.
- Scobie: Would you give any weight at all to the fact that Mel was half Jewish in terms of the Jewish response?
- Meyers: No, the opposition did that for us. Gerald L.K. Smith and Wesley Swift and those.
- Scobie: In what way?
- Meyers: Hammered on Melville Himmelfarb. They hammered on it, you see, "You can't elect this woman that sleeps with a Jew" and that type of thing. So we didn't do a thing; we ignored it.
- Scobie: Was this all underground kind of campaigning?
- Meyers: Well, no. I mean those papers, what is it, The Cross and the Flag, I think was one. I forget what Wesley Swift's was. But they were published. They were not underground papers.
- Scobie: Nothing secret about it?
- Meyers: No, nothing surreptitious about it.
- Scobie: So in terms of the '44 campaign, the people that were primarily involved in making decisions were you and the Lybecks and that's about it?
- Meyers: No, no. That was the decision to go into it. The Fords were very active in the campaign itself, and we used all of Ford's resources. John Baumgartner, who was the incumbent councilman in the 12th district who had succeeded Ford. As a matter of fact, I ran one of his campaigns. He was so popular that in 1937, I think it was, he was not opposed for reelection.



Scobie: Okay, who else?

Meyers: We had those resources and we used Boddy and the Daily News for everything that we could.

#### Finances

Scobie: What about money? What kind of money were you able to get and where did you get it from?

Meyers: Nobody had a hell of a lot of money. The Democratic congressional campaign committee would send out money.

Scobie: Was that on the state level?

Meyers: No, congressional. Each party traditionally has a congressional campaign committee which allocates to different districts a certain amount of the national committee funds.

Scobie: This comes out of the national committee. What about on the state level?

Meyers: On the state level in 1944, Earl Warren was the Republican governor and we couldn't expect very much.

Scobie: But the state committee did not contribute?

Meyers: No. The state committee didn't raise much. If it raised any money, I wasn't aware of it.

Scobie: Did you get many labor contributions?

Meyers: Yes, we got labor contributions; and, as important as labor contributions, we got many labor votes.

Scobie: Here's '44. These are expenses. Her total expenses were \$935. This says that she didn't get any--it says from who or what source received, none. So probably she didn't get much of anything substantially in the primary. [Continues to go through papers] Here we go. Here are the contributions for the fall. You might want to look those over and see if it rings any bells.

Meyers: [Studies papers] I wouldn't say anything was very overwhelming, would you?

Scobie: No.

Meyers: The name Mary Foy won't mean anything to you.

Scobie: What does it mean to you?

Meyers: She was the very first Democratic national committeewoman from California.

Scobie: Let's move on to '46 and if anything comes to mind on '44, that's fine. [Tape interruption: telephone] By this time, she had established herself.

Meyers: I don't know whether she had made that basket speech in that first session.

Scobie: She made that in '46; I think it was something like September.

Meyers: Yes, before the '46 election.

Scobie: Yes, she had been an alternate delegate to the UN. She was elected "freshman of the congressmen" in '44. I don't quite know why she was elected. Do you remember anything about that?

Meyers: No. I don't know what that phrase means.

Scobie: Then she also wrote a pamphlet by the '46 campaign in reply to the criticism about blacks' contribution to the war. She had written a substantial statement about black contributions to the armed forces during World War II and had circulated it widely.

Meyers: Probably assisted by Mary Bethune.

Scobie: I'm sure.

Meyers: Now, let me go back a half a minute because I want to go back to Mr. Lybeck. Mr. Lybeck was one of the old Black Mask authors. It was a pulp magazine. A dime detective pulp magazine in the thirties that produced Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler and he knew the English language. I had done a lot of that type of thing; I've written biographies and screen plays and stuff. As a matter of fact, I have worked for several studios. So we knew a little bit about the English language and there was much that was written, especially two speeches that Helen made in Democratic conventions, that were collaborations of Ed and my own. We ghostwrote much of each.

Scobie: Do you remember what they were about?

Meyers: No, I can remember what they were about, but vaguely. But she made the speeches and did them beautifully, but I want to correct any impression that I might have left here that Ed was just a political journeyman who traveled from campaign to campaign. He was a highly intelligent, articulate man.

### The 1946 Campaign

Meyers: Now, to go to '46. In '46, of course, it was a vicious campaign.  
[Tape interruption]

Scobie: Roberts.

Meyers: Oh, Fred [Frederick M.] Roberts.

Scobie: Yes, here's the primary and we'll pick it up here. Then the final election I've got right here. She ran against Roberts.

Meyers: Oh, this is Wilbur W. Campbell. That's not the same Campbell as in 1944. The story we got was that the Republican congressional campaign committee would send \$25,000 out here to the Republican candidate and when William Campbell was the candidate he just sat on it.

Scobie: He didn't use it?

Meyers: Well, he used some of it. He had to make a showing. So one day he came up again, "Now, we're not going to give you the money. We're going to come out there and see that it gets spent."

Scobie: Yes, these are '44. Here are the expenditures of all the candidates and here Campbell spent \$7,200; Douglas, \$997. These are three different things that Campbell put in.

Meyers: Of course, you can't take that literally for several reasons. There were only certain types of expenditures that you had to report.

Scobie: Tell me a little more about that. Do you remember which kinds?

Meyers: I don't remember it myself. I remember '50 because I was responsible for most of it in '50, but I think most of it had to do with newspapers, radio, and later with television--that type of expenditure--and printing expenditures you had to report. My recollection is, and I could be very much at fault here, that you didn't have to report meeting costs or donations to organizations that staged meetings.

Scobie: Now, this was the '50 campaign. We'll pick that up later. In '46 she's running against a black.

#### A Black Opposition Candidate

Meyers: In '46, Fred Roberts.

Scobie: Right. I understand that the Republicans sent Joe Louis out to campaign. Do you remember anything about that?

Meyers: Yes, he came out. It didn't mean anything.

Scobie: Why not?

Meyers: It didn't mean anything because in the first place, Joe was hardly articulate, and a lot of people resented the idea. He was not a Californian and this was a pretty parochial, provincial sort of state. You have to realize that when Jim Roosevelt ran for governor in 1950 he was a twelve-year resident here, and they crucified him on the fact that he was a "carpetbagger." So you can figure what effect Joe Louis had. Intelligent people and intelligent blacks simply ignored it. Now, there was a countervailing balance there because Hawkins was and still is immensely popular down there, and we tied in with Gus and ran a Douglas-Hawkins campaign. It was not just that we tied in with him; he tied in with us too. I don't know how many votes Roberts got, but it didn't mean anything.

Scobie: [Looks through papers] Here's the general election. [Gives it to Meyers]

Meyers: Roberts got a few votes at that, didn't he.

Scobie: But let me show you something interesting. I think I've got a breakdown by the districts.

Meyers: You see that Healy gets beaten and Voorhis gets beaten and Outland gets beaten.

Scobie: Now look at this. This is kind of interesting.

Meyers: All in the 62nd?

Scobie: No, this '44 versus '46. In the 62nd, her opponent's vote is about 11,000 and she's picked up over 14,000 so even in the 62nd she won.

Meyers: Yes, that's where Gus Hawkins figured.

Scobie: Right. In fact, she did a little bit better than she had in '44. Here's Campbell's vote.

Meyers: Roberts didn't do an awful lot better in 1946.

Scobie: No, nothing hardly.

Meyers: But he did suprisingly well in Vernon Kilpatrick's district.

Scobie: Yes, but not as well as Campbell had done.

Meyers: No.

Scobie: But Helen drops way down. Now, the total vote here is thirty-nine and it's only twenty-eight.

Meyers: Right. You've dropped 10,000.

Scobie: You dropped 10,000. That's a big drop.

Meyers: Here's twenty-six and here's thirty-three.

Scobie: So you're getting a loss of population there, or voting anyway.

Meyers: Mencken used to say, "Don't stir up the animals." I think in the '44 campaign the animals were stirred up.

Scobie: Why?

Meyers: Well, because of the invasion from the outside. Here the Republicans dropped 14,000 votes and Helen drops 9,000 votes because of the invasion from Hollywood of a silk stocking gal.

Scobie: So the Republicans are getting all uptight.

Meyers: Yes, they were getting uptight. [Laughs] As I say, the animals got stirred up.

Scobie: Between campaigns, between '44 and '46, did you keep in touch with what was going on with Florence Reynolds?

Meyers: She was Helen's local secretary.

Scobie: She had worked for Ford also.

Meyers: Yes, and Helen took her on from Ford.

Scobie: Right. Did you keep in touch with her?

Meyers: Oh, yes.

Scobie: What kinds of things did she do?

Meyers: She was strictly a secretary. She was not a politico. She would be called today a field representative. That's hardly true because she didn't have it in her to be a real field representative. But she ran the office and did what was necessary in the way of telephoning and was a very lovely person, a very nice person, very easy to get along with. She made no enemies, I promise you that.

Scobie: Did Helen keep in pretty close touch with her district?

Meyers: Yes.

Scobie: How?

Meyers: Through Ed, through myself, through Susie, through people like Mary Bethune. And she became very friendly with her original primary opponent, Loren Miller, and through the assemblymen. Helen did her homework and she was available and she came out on request and she made talks and she was highly visible.

Scobie: Do you think she really sensed what the district needed?

Meyers: I think that at that point Ed Lybeck and Ruth Lybeck were invaluable to her.

Now there are some people who become too big for their britches. We have one congressman today, an old hand, whose field representative is certain that he's really the congressman. This was never true of Ed. He was there to help. Now I have to tell you, jumping ahead a little, that Ed was opposed to the senatorial campaign.

Scobie: Would you like to move into the '50 campaign and then we can come back and pick up anything we have left out?

Meyers: Oh, we can jump around a little. He was opposed on the basis of the fact that because of so many people being knocked out in '46; there were some that I forgot, like [Everett G.] Burkhalter was knocked out that same year by [Carl] Hinshaw. She began to get seniority on the Foreign Relations Committee and Ed felt that the chairmanship of the Foreign Relations Committee was more important than being a Senator of the United States, especially a freshman Senator who perforce is supposed to be inarticulate and unassuming. You don't get very many [Pat] Moynihans. But he actually felt that it was more important and the fact of the matter is that within six years she'd have been chairman and she'd have gone on being elected in that district ad infinitum.

Meyers: I'll tell you how easy it was. When she was defeated in '50, it was Sam Yorty who was elected. He just threw his hat in the ring and got elected. There was no question about the fact that she could have kept on. Yorty hardly campaigned at all.

It fell on me to make a trip around the state. I think that was in '49. Now, this is strictly '50. If you want to lead up to it, let's back track.

#### Finances

Scobie: All right, let's back track a little bit because I have lots of questions on '50 and you've got lots of thoughts, but let's finish up here. In '48, let's pull out this stuff for '48. [Brings out materials on 1948] And I've got another question on '46. You were not treasurer?

Meyers: No, I was in the IRS.

Scobie: So that's why Susie Clifton put her name on it.

Meyers: That's right.

Scobie: Here's 1946. There are two financial statements filed for '46. One comes from Susie Clifton and one comes from Helen. She files her own.

Meyers: Oh, along about that time, the state required a separate statement from the campaign committee and from the candidate.

Scobie: That's required by the state?

Meyers: Yes, the State of California.

Scobie: So that's why there are two of them?

Meyers: Yes.

Scobie: Okay, because I was wondering about that because that wasn't true previous to that date.

Meyers: She had no expenditures, nothing. She just got this money.

Scobie: Yes, but then Susie's put in a lot.

Meyers: Yes, but what I mean is she collects \$565, she contributes \$385, which totals \$950 and it shows \$950 to the committee itself. This is the only kind of thing you had to report really.

That's the old Sentinel, eh?

Scobie: Read those two and see if you've got any comment on that. It's kind of interesting.

Meyers: [Tape interruption as Meyers reads letters] Usually a letter from Leon Washington was for money, for support. You could almost put the word "support" in quotes. [Tape interruption] Well, Washington was caught in a dilemma. He was forced to open his columns to any black candidate. There was another paper down there at this time, the California Eagle, edited by Charlotta Bass. The Eagle was much more forthrightly a Democratic paper, but Charlotta was getting old and losing her grip a little and then Loren Miller succeeded to the ownership of the Eagle and he made no bones about the fact that it was a Democratic paper. But that came after these years. The Washington letter was typical of him. He was always looking for something. In '48, did Campbell come back in '48?

Scobie: No, her primary candidate there was [W. Wallace] Braden.

Meyers: Oh, yes, Wallie Braden.

Scobie: What kind of a candidate was he?

Meyers: I don't recall him terribly much. She beat him two to one handily. [Pause] Boy, there were a lot of irresponsible people running for office. However, Braden was not one of them. He was a responsible citizen.

Scobie: Now, here's Susie's financial statement for '46 that I was looking for. This expense form of the congressional district campaign is probably what finally required much more substantial breakdown.

Meyers: Yes, that's '46. It seems to me that in years gone by you had to file a statement before the end of the campaign and after. [Reads from 14th Congressional District Campaign Committee Statement of Receipts and Expenditures] Philip Dunne, Otto Preminger. Yes, you see a lot of movie people here. She got a thousand dollars from the Democratic National Committee whereas Campbell, the Republican, would get twenty-five. I think this is probably one of the few that are honest. [Laughter] Now, here she got another \$2,500, from the Democratic National Committee.

Scobie: Still nothing from the state, I gather.



- Meyers: No. Mel put in \$296. Marshall Stimson, Evie Chavoor, Charles Carr was a Young Democrat who later became a senior federal judge. Stanley Mosk and...
- Scobie: Mosk became a California Supreme Court justice and still is as a matter of fact.
- Meyers: Yes. We had two of them on the bench of the supreme court that came right out of that group. Matt [Matthew] Tobriner is the other.
- Scobie: Did you put any of your own money into her campaigning as you went along?
- Meyers: I was living on shoestrings at the time. I think I got married in '38 and I was making something like \$124 a month.
- Scobie: [Laughs] That's not too much, is it?
- Meyers: What we did was we dipped in our pockets for odds and ends expenses that came up where you could use cash.

The Big Political Gamble: A Try for the United States Senate

Meyers: Testing the Waters in 1949

- Scobie: How would you assess her situation as she goes into the '50 campaign?

[end tape 1, side B; begin tape 2, side A]

- Meyers: In '48, '49 and those years, [Sheridan] Downey's group was the dominant group. By that time, the Culbert Olson group had fallen by the wayside and Upton Sinclair had vanished. We had a Republican state administration. The result was that the focal point of the Democratic party lay in the Downey senatorial seat and his group. In '49 I made a trip around the state to sound out Helen's prospects for the Senate, because it had become obvious at least to the people back in Washington--not to me out here, but the people in Washington --that Downey was an ill man and might not run for reelection. I found among practically all of the leaders in the state, especially north, that, "Yes, I'll be glad to support Helen if Downey doesn't run" type of thing.

Meyers: Bill Malone, who was the power in San Francisco and the Democratic county chairman then, said that very flatly. He said, "I love Helen, but my duty is to Downey and my connections are with Downey." What of course he didn't say was that his patronage was from Downey, and "I'm going to have to support Downey if he runs." I found that pretty true up and down the state with some violent exceptions. There were some people who felt that Downey had progressed from far left to extreme right and who were unhappy with him. That was in the labor groups and the labor papers and that type of organization.

Scobie: What was their reaction to Helen?

Meyers: Their reaction was that they liked Helen.

Scobie: They'd take her right away?

Meyers: They liked Helen, yes. I don't know whether you've got that letter that I wrote. It must have been an eight-page letter that I wrote to her about my reactions.

Scobie: I'm sure that it's in her files, but I haven't seen it.

Meyers: Some of it was very favorable and because of the fact that you don't ever want to deliberately hurt anybody's feelings, I would color-- and I did color things--with such thoughts as "I'm sure that if that happens that he will support you," because what we couldn't foresee was that there were groups who were determined to have anybody but Helen largely because of her public stands on certain things. Tidewater oil was one of the things.

As a matter of fact, one of the most influential Democrats in the state was John B. Elliott. Elliott had been MacAdoo's campaign manager and had been the campaign manager for the Garner primary campaign back in '32 when Garner won the state against Roosevelt, and a very wealthy man who spoke for the oil interests. He owned an oil company of his own. He told Helen that when the tidewater oil vote comes up, "Why don't you visit the family in Vermont. You don't have to vote yes on it. We don't ask you to do that. Just stay the hell out of Washington." And she refused. He told me the same thing in an elevator at the California Club. The result was that oil money came in here on railroad gondolas. They would shovel it off. Not literally of course, but they had no end of money.

Her stand on 160-acres alienated a lot of the agribusiness companies. People who I talked to on this trip around [the state] like Lionel Steinberg, very prominent in the valley centered around Bakersfield and Fresno, a big grower: "Sure I love Douglas." But he went overboard against her when she was adamant on 160-acres, you see. A lot of these liberal postures resulted in money being not only lost, but spent against her--violently spent.

Scobie: Did you suspect this at all when you made your tour?

Meyers: No. In the first place, I think that the lure of a statewide office and the membership in that club back there is conducive to a little bit of temporary insanity. I further think that there are too many politicians in Washington who think that they're able to judge local situations from a distance of 2,000 miles. There's no question in my mind that Helen was nudged into this by associates in Washington who said, "We'll support you and we'll do everything we can and we'll raise money and you're a cinch."

I remember when Nixon filed, Helen herself made the statement that "this is going to be a great campaign because it's going to be a campaign on the issues. I'm on one side of issues and he's on another." It never developed that way. She kept to the issues and he ran the campaign that won't stay buried, shall I put it that way, that campaign. I ran into it in England. They still talk about that damn campaign.

In any event, what was not anticipated was the fact that when Downey retired either by reason of health or because he thought he might be beaten and I choose to believe it was by reason of poor health, nobody anticipated Boddy being the tool of the coalescence of all of these conservatives, if you want to call it that. Nobody dreamed he would run against Helen in the primary.

Scobie: These conservatives would go Democrat in a normal situation?

Meyers: They weren't Democratic as far as Boddy was concerned, for sure. But then most of them promptly formed "Democrats for Nixon" like Mrs. Mattison Boyd Jones. I remember getting the call from some people when Boddy was announced, who said, "My God," because he was very popular and his paper was popular, "aren't you afraid of Manchester Boddy?" I said, "Well, I'll tell you what you do. Go down on the street and ask the first ten people you see who is the publisher of the San Francisco Examiner, or go up to San Francisco and ask them who the publisher of the Los Angeles Daily News is and then tell me if I have a right to be scared."

He posed no threat except that his support automatically was lost when he ran as was the support of his Daily News. It was automatically lost to Helen when he ran and it was automatically lost to the rest of the campaign because he refused to take a stand in the general election. He did no endorsement which in a strong Democratic paper is the same as an anti-stance. In any event, that was unforeseen. And Boddy became, we chose to believe, a tool of the oil interests.

Meyers: Boddy may not have beaten her in the primary, but he sure as hell helped defeat her in the general. He of course hammered the 160-acre and oil issues, but he reserved his toughest attacks on the issue of communism. Of course, the press picked up these attacks and amplified them. Chotiner dubbed Helen "The Pink Lady," and put out the reprehensible "Pink Sheet" comparing Helen's voting record with Marcantonio's. While Helen was the first to label Nixon "Tricky Dick," he countered with such genteel effusions as "she's pink right down to her under-pants." She was editorially called "the darling of the Hollywood parlor pinks and Reds."

Nixon emerged as the tool of Kyle Palmer, political editor of the Times who, along with the Chandlers, hated Jerry Voorhis. With solid backing of the "Committee of 100" which was put together by Palmer, John Garland--a Chandler in-law--Nixon easily won the Republican nomination in the 12th district. In the post-war, with anti-communism gripping the nation in '46, he beat Voorhis badly and was easily reelected in '48.

Hand-picked by the Times, Nixon's Senate campaign in '50 began when Asa Call, top dog of Pacific Mutual Insurance Company, which was, I seem to remember the largest independent insurance company in the West, and a committee of twenty raised the first \$20,000 and Murray Chotiner was hired. Nixon had an easy time in his primary race. But it was different on the Democratic side. Manchester Boddy, backed by Ed Pauley and John B. Elliott, oil men, opposed her on tidewater and agribusiness.

The campaign developed much as you probably already know it except that there were some things that I don't think anybody has spoken about so I might as well get my feet wet.

Scobie: That's one of the main purposes of these conversations.

Some Critical Problems: Money, Strategy, and James Roosevelt

Meyers: I felt and Ed felt and other people who had some knowledge of state campaigning felt that we should concentrate in not more than eight areas in the state: San Francisco, Sacramento, the San Jose-Santa Clara County area, Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Bernardino.

Scobie: All urban areas.

Meyers: Urban and Democratic. Forget those that you could write off, like Orange and Riverside. Forget them and the smaller counties, which is exactly what was not done.

Meyers: Helen spent a good deal of her time in one-horse stops in the San Joaquin Valley because she was enamored of this 160-acre issue. As a matter of fact, the day before the election she and Evie Chavoor were in the valley and spent something like, I don't know, \$16,000 or \$18,000 on last-minute newspaper ads which never do anybody a damn bit of good and that was our deficit. We wound up with a \$17,000 deficit.

But there was not enough urban exposure on a big scale. Now you can't in a senatorial campaign run a house meeting type-of-thing. You need mass rallies. So we had some mass rallies. And what happened? We had a tailgate rally at Douglas Aircraft with thousands of guys that belong to the machinists or the United Auto Workers or one of those unions who gathered around. And what did Helen talk about? A hundred and sixty acres! They couldn't care less! We were mired down by a lot of lip service from unions. I particularly remember the machinists.

The union paid for a statewide broadcast. And I remember being on the scene. As I recall it was KNX, and they paid for it. It was a good speech because it was a labor speech, what they wanted. When the results came in, they hadn't voted for her. We got quite a little bit of union money in that campaign. I would say that the backbone of the financing was union money. We have it there. [Looks through papers; reads] Textile Workers of America, California Labor League, CIO Political Action, ILGWU [International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union], Machinists, Nonpartisan Political League, Amalgamated Political Action Fund, Railway Labor's Political League, voluntary contributions by delegates at the State Convention of AFL, Restaurant Employees and Bartenders League, Trainmen's Political Education League, Greater Los Angeles CIO-PAC National Election Fund. The bulk of the money was labor, but they didn't vote for her.

Scobie: Why?

Meyers: I think they were scared by the Nixon campaign.

Scobie: What were the real elements of the Nixon campaign that you feel upset labor?

Meyers: The anti-communists tied her up with Vito Marcantonio, an avowed socialist, something like fifty-two or fifty-four issues where they voted alike, but they didn't say a word about the fact that Nixon had voted on about thirty-four issues the same as Marcantonio. But it was a masterful hatchet job. I hate to use the word, but it was! The machinists were particularly noticeable because they not only had spent money but they did give money to the campaign. They were largely concentrated around the aircraft industry.

- Scobie: It's been said that one of the reasons that she lost labor (Carey McWilliams said this, I think, in an article) was because there was no grassroots campaign throughout labor. In other words, top brass went for her but they made no effort to work on the membership. How do you feel about that?
- Meyers: That is internal and the results would seem to bear that out but we were not aware of the fact that there was no grassroots effort. We had to rely on the leadership of the unions to do their homework.
- Scobie: Would you say that she was ruined by the union rank-and-file that really was frightened by Nixon's campaign rather than agribusiness and oil?
- Meyers: Oil and agribusiness provided the wherewithal. Nixon spent a fortune in that campaign and when I tell you that they brought money out here in gondolas, you have to believe me. There was a tremendous drive for money in Texas for Nixon; oil money and oil rallied it. There's no question about the fact that the Nixon campaign which was able to buy all kinds of advertising and all kinds of radio was financed by agribusiness but more by oil. It was effective in a hatchet job. The life blood of it was money and the hatchet job frightened everybody.
- Scobie: But the people who provided the money weren't really frightened by the issue. They were just using that to get to the people.
- Meyers: They were looking at their pocketbook. Just like this Lionel Steinberg I talk about. As a matter of fact one of the original Young Democrats was a man who lived in Berkeley. It was Russell Lowell Miller. He was attorney for DiGiorgio and he said bluntly to me, "Where do you think I have to go?"
- Scobie: Was that later on or was that in your original tour?
- Meyers: No, that was later on. but the point is because earlier I didn't think that Lowell was one of the persons I would have to talk to.
- Scobie: Let's go back and pick up a couple of things you said. First of all, you said that you and Ed decided to concentrate in eight areas and the decision was not adhered to. Why not?
- Meyers: Because she couldn't refuse an invitation. At least it seemed to me she couldn't.
- Scobie: Who was letting her go ahead and do that? Wasn't there anybody who could say, "Helen, watch what you are doing."
- Meyers: No, no, no. I don't think so. I think that the possibility--have you talked to Paul Ziffren by the way?

Scobie: No, I have not. I may do that on my own but this project has not talked to him.

Meyers: Why? He raised a lot of money for us.

Scobie: They just don't have enough money to interview that many people.

Meyers: Well, let me say this, that Paul who later became Democratic National Committeeman, who was one of the (with Alan Cranston) founders of the CDC [California Democratic Council], was an enormous influence, and is even now, and was chairman of our finance committee. I would think that when you look over some of the individuals here, I would say practically every large contribution stemmed through Paul's effort.

By the way, we had something happen that was very funny. I mentioned the people in Washington. There was a meeting in my office of Paul Ziffren, Ed and Ruth Lybeck, and myself. Susie might have been there. It's difficult to say about Susie now because she had a divided loyalty at the time. She was very close to Jim Roosevelt who was running for governor during that campaign in 1950 and to the Douglas campaign. One of your questions in your letter was how did these campaigns mesh. They didn't mesh. They simply didn't mesh. They were supposed to mesh but they didn't. They went off, like Stephen Leacock's hero who got on a horse and went off in all directions.

Scobie: Why didn't they mesh?

Meyers: I don't know. I think that both camps thought the other one was a loser and both were right. [Laughter] No, it wasn't a question of ideology. Jim obviously had a tougher time. He was against a popular incumbent in Earl Warren and at the outset there was a belief that Helen had a real chance to win.

#### The Power Structure of the Campaign Committee

Meyers: But when things began to take a little bit of an unpleasant turn, into this meeting strides a man who looks for all the world like a character out of Eric Ambler in a trench coat and a hat pulled down and dark glasses and he introduced himself as Ed Flynn. He was "sent out here to run the campaign."

Scobie: Do you remember what month that was? Was this before the primary got going?

Meyers: No, it was in the general campaign.

Scobie: Just walks in!

Meyers: No, he was sent out here. He actually had been sent out. He later became the director out here for CARE, a fund raiser. But the funny part of it was that he not only introduced himself and sat down and participated but he also showed a total lack of political judgment. We made a date to have dinner that night because I wanted to feel him out and he said, "Well, let's go out to the valley and we'll go to a steakhouse." We drive out there and I look out of the car and this damn steakhouse is being picketed. He gets out of the car and I said, "Where the hell are you going?" He said, "I'm going in there." I said, "Not through that picket line you're not." This is the kind of campaign manager that the Senate committee or somebody sent out.

Scobie: This was sent out by the Truman administration?

Meyers: I think that he was sent out by the Democratic senatorial committee. Now, it may be that Helen sent him out, I don't know, because I never chased that down. [Looks through papers] Wait a minute--Democratic senatorial campaign committee, naturally part of the national committee. He began to take things in hand and he did, to the best of my recollection, for about a month. Then we rebelled because he did not know his tail from a hot rock. In any event, Evie Chavoor traveled with Helen to a great extent and I think that there was a lot of impulsive action.

Scobie: Was Harold Tipton in charge of the whole thing? Was there anyone in charge of the whole campaign?

Meyers: Yes, Tipton had a title. This man had a title too. God, you bring a name in that I'd completely forgotten, Tipton. [Pauses to look at 1950 financial report]

The David Hillman Agency--we wound up owing them something like \$17,000. That was the advertising agency that put in all these last minute ads. The only thing you had to report was that type of expense. You didn't really report any--here's the California Eagle--you didn't report money that you spent on meetings or money that you gave to little local committees. Who the devil signed this financial report?

Scobie: Helen.

Meyers: Did she sign it? Yes, I think she did. Anyway, I prepared it probably.

Scobie: So you operated in this campaign--



Meyers: I operated as part of the top committee and as treasurer. I remember that in Fresno one time I came on a Friday without any money, and I owed a payroll there of \$1,500. I called the Bank of America where I banked and where the Helen Douglas account was at Fourth and Spring and I said, "Hey, I've got to have \$1,500 in Fresno today." He said, "All right, who to?" and so forth and it was up there. We were operating from hand to mouth. But the point that I make is you [didn't] report this type of thing because you didn't have to. The state was interested only in public media.

Scobie: I want to pick up one other thing you said, before we go on. You said that there wasn't enough urban exposure. I was wondering, could you have gotten urban exposure?

Meyers: With more money we could have done the same thing as Nixon. We could have saturated radio.

Scobie: Because the newspapers--

Meyers: The newspapers were against us. But we could have bought enough ads to say things in the ads. We could have used more local radio, we could have saturated the city with radio had we the money that Nixon had.

Scobie: So when you said awhile ago that because of some of her beliefs she really cost herself the '50 campaign--

Meyers: No, no, I didn't say that. I think she'd have lost the '50 campaign in any event because it was just not a Democratic year and it was just not in the cards for anybody but a conservative to be elected. Naturally she's a liberal because of her beliefs but she dwelled on just a few of those beliefs and hammered away on them. Nobody was against public housing. It wasn't an issue and fair employment wasn't an issue and social security by that time was not an issue. It was just a few of the things that she was adamant about: tidewater oil and the 160-acre limitation.

Scobie: But there's your money right there.

Meyers: Yes.

Scobie: One of the specific things that you said she would be able to talk about was something that John Elliott did against her. Was there kind of a triumvirate of Elliott, Pauley, and one other?

Meyers: Elliott and Pauley who owns Pauley Petroleum, yes.

Scobie: What went on there?

Meyers: What they did was raise money.

Scobie: Against her?

Meyers: Yes. Now, Elliott was really very, very very fond of Helen and admired her tremendously, but because of his position in the oil industry and Jameson Petroleum which he owned, he had to go against her or he had to raise money against her. My personal feeling is that he voted for her, but that's just one vote. Ed Pauley, who was a nominal Democrat, was in pretty much the same position.

[end tape 2, side A; begin tape 2, side B]

Meyers: They raised a lot of money and I would say that the oil money that came into the state from outside the state came through that little group.

#### The Chotiner Campaign Tactics

Scobie: How much credence do you put to the [Murray] Chotiner type of activity as far as the extent of her loss went?

Meyers: Do you mean in numbers, the fact that she lost by a million votes.

Scobie: Yes.

Meyers: I would say that the Chotiner campaign was the only campaign that Nixon could have run in that day, not only because it was successful but because of the fact that we were a fairly liberal community at the time. The fact that we elected Earl Warren doesn't say we were terribly conservative I don't think. Time has proved that. But the point is that it was a scare campaign. It was a campaign that was designed to destroy Helen.

Now, one of the things I have to interpose here quickly is that the Chotiner tactic was not to defeat an opponent; the evidence is that his tactic was to destroy an opponent. There was never a comeback from a Chotiner campaign. Jerry wasn't able to make it, Helen wasn't able to make it. I guess the only one you could say who was able to make it was [Hubert] Humphrey.

But in this day we had a very large, a very substantial, union vote. I can't possibly tell you that any of the big employers dictated that you had to vote for Nixon. The way Louis B. Mayer in an earlier election had done for Hoover against Al Smith was

Meyers: just to dock everybody a day's pay for the Hoover campaign. Nobody could say that, but the fact is that there was extreme pressure brought.

This campaign, by the way, did not originate with Murray Chotiner. It originated back in 1934 against Upton Sinclair. They, meaning the Palmer, Call, Times group, destroyed Upton Sinclair politically and it was the same kind of a coalition that did it in 1934, except that then oil didn't figure in it so prominently and agribusiness didn't figure. It was a lot of things, including fright and communism, but it was primarily a destruction campaign.

Scobie: But yet you said a Democratic victory wasn't in the cards for anyone though.

Meyers: No. I think I'd have to see the rest of what happened in the United States in 1950.

Scobie: Well, for example, you get Claude Pepper being smashed in Florida. You're getting Republicans who are playing on the Communist issue.

Meyers: It was McCarthy.

Scobie: Absolutely.

Meyers: It was the height of McCarthyism.

Scobie: I think as one commentator said, Helen probably would have lost anyway; it's just that there were a lot of things that were done to make her loss worse.

Meyers: Oh, sure. As I say, it was a destruction campaign.

Scobie: A couple of comments come to mind on which I would like your opinion. In an article I read the comment was made that one of the basic problems in her '50 campaign was that the grassroots--the CDC didn't exist and that was a real problem for Democrats. In fact, the author pointed specifically to I think it was the 57th Assembly District when Attorney General J. Howard McGrath came out to talk on behalf of Helen. He drew very few people. As this was a Democratic district and the comment was made that the head of the district's Democratic party hadn't been contacted, she was upset and therefore she didn't do anything to publicize the speech. The author cites this example as typical of the lack of communication that was going on in the '50 campaign. Is this a valid statement at all?

Meyers: It was partially valid, yes, except that the 57th district was not Democratic. Even the Democrats by that time had been scared off and there was a strong "Democrats-for-Nixon" campaign. As a matter of

Meyers: fact, Bill Gleason, who owned four newspapers down through Riverside and Palm Springs, and a couple of radio stations, was a prominent Democrat, headed the Nixon campaign. There were a lot of disaffected Democrats, not because of anything that Helen did but because they were just scared. Then there were also a lot of people on both sides at all times who want to be with winners.

Scobie: Would you say, though, that those running the campaign on the grass-roots level made some mistakes in terms of getting to all the votes that were possible?

Meyers: Oh, yes, there was always that type of mistake, of course.

Scobie: For example, I read some place that Helen made a lot of women mad because she turned down an invitation to go to a Federation of Women's Club talks. She was supposed to go and debate with Nixon, and she did not show, ostensibly because she wanted to stay in Washington for a key vote. The women were furious.

Meyers: I know. That kind of thing always happens and the Nixon campaign, not because it won and therefore was perfect, but the Nixon campaign took advantage of every slip.

#### The Role of Administration Democrats

Meyers: Now, let me stop you for one moment. One of the things that hurt--you mentioned McGrath coming out--was the fact that to the best of my recollection only two important people, really important vote-getting people, came out from Washington despite all of the pledges of support, despite all of the assurances of help. One of them was the vice-president.

Scobie: Alben Barkley.

Meyers: Right, and one of them was Hubert Humphrey and Humphrey really campaigned. Humphrey went up and down the state with her and without her especially in the San Joaquin Valley.

Barkley stayed in his hotel drinking bourbon and branch. He talked to a little cocktail party that was supposed to raise money, but he didn't produce a vote. Humphrey did.

Scobie: What was the matter with Barkley? He just didn't want to fight the forces?

- Meyers: He didn't care. He was out here on a junket with expenses paid. He didn't care. But Humphrey was a different sort of an animal. Humphrey, when he came out, threw himself into it. He was at fund-raising events. He was out in the boondocks making speeches. But that was the extent.
- Scobie: What the other big wheels did was tape-record things, remember? Lyndon Johnson, Harold Ickes, all tape-recorded and then those were done on radio.
- Meyers: It doesn't mean anything. It has about as much charm as this thing is going to have when you play it back! It doesn't mean a damn thing. [Laughter] But I'm serious about it. Would you be likely, unless you were wound up, tight as a tick on some important issue, would you be likely to sit down and listen to a tape recording, unless it was by somebody you had a personal interest in? For example, if I were in doubt about a vote that was this way or that way and if Humphrey had made a tape recording on it or if Helen had made one at that time, I might have listened to it. But I wouldn't have listened to Lyndon Johnson at that time.
- Scobie: What do you think this meant in terms of the administration's attitude toward Helen?
- Meyers: It's a ticklish point. There was a strong feeling here that she was dumped by the administration. There was a strong feeling here that a lot of the people who provided the money for the opposition were still strong enough in Washington to have weight. There is no question in my mind that the very oil people who showered down for Nixon were for Democrats in other situations and in other states. They would have been for Sheridan Downey without any question, you see.
- Scobie: When did you begin to feel she was being dumped by the administration? After the primary?
- Meyers: When nobody came out here. You couldn't get any one. It just didn't work out.
- Scobie: Did that begin to take the wind out of your sails?
- Meyers: No. You couldn't admit defeat. You admitted it two or three or four or five days before when the polls began to look terrible, but the fact of the matter is, we were running from source to source and place to place for help and for money because it got to be a situation where we almost were disorganized. If we looked good in Bakersfield, then we looked lousy in Fresno and local people would be calling in and saying that it's no good.

Some Perspectives on Defeat

- Scobie: Was there much communication between counties? You had one person in charge of each county, like Bea Stern in Sacramento County and so on. Did they funnel information into a central core committee?
- Meyers: Yes, most of it came into the headquarters where Ruth was stationed.
- Scobie: The communication with Ruth included you and Ed.
- Meyers: Yes, the trouble was that it had come in daily and we'd only meet about weekly or semi-weekly.
- Scobie: So Tipton wasn't really influential.
- Meyers: You know, until you mentioned that name, I had completely forgotten him.
- Scobie: That's really interesting because he's referred to a lot and he wrote a lot of letters and so forth, but he must not have been very powerful.
- Meyers: No, he didn't know anybody.
- Scobie: So the power triumvirate or the power group again would be you and Ed and Ruth and Susie?
- Meyers: Yes, plus Paul Ziffren, very definitely. Up north it was Ellie Heller in San Francisco and Ben [Benjamin H.] Swig.
- Scobie: So this was your Southern California group and then you had the north.
- Meyers: Yes.
- Scobie: Was there a friction between the north and south?
- Meyers: No, no, there wasn't friction.
- Scobie: Why do you think Helen didn't run again?
- Meyers: Possibly Mel, I think.
- Scobie: In what way do you mean that?
- Meyers: I think that if she had run again there might have been a divorce.

Scobie: Why do you think that?

Meyers: Because I think that Mel didn't want her to go through it again. He didn't want to go through campaigning again. They were both getting a little bit older and I don't think that Mel particularly relished the long absences which can happen at any time. You see, one of the things that a lot of people don't realize is that Mel is a tremendously intelligent person, an intellectual. I would say that the strongest thing that Helen had was her husband; I would say that he was the brightest person around her. This is quite a man and I think that he deserved to be considered.

Scobie: Do you think he finally said something?

Meyers: It's possible that he did or she sensed it, in the first place. In the second place is that she was pretty damn badly beaten and she had to start not from scratch but from back of scratch and it was the kind of campaign that left wounds on both sides, on both sides. You couldn't call people, who went for Nixon, the things that they were called and expect them to be friendly two years later.

It was that kind of campaign. But any campaign that Nixon gets into is always that kind of a campaign, even with Murray Chotiner dead! Amazingly enough, Murray Chotiner and I were associated in a couple of cases after that. No, I think that in the first place, their daughter was growing and they spent more time in Vermont, and I just think that it would have been difficult for them if she ran again.

Scobie: Did you get to know them personally through all this?

Meyers: Oh, sure, I knew them personally.

Scobie: What was going on with the kids? Mary Helen was in Washington some of the time, wasn't she?

Meyers: Some of the time. She spent a couple of years in a kibbutz in Israel.

Scobie: That was later but I meant when Helen was in Congress.

Meyers: No, she was in Vermont a lot of the time too.

Scobie: Did Helen spend much time with her kids?

Meyers: No, that was one of the problems. I think that's one of the reasons why there was no further attempt to run. I think the family began to loom more and more importantly in her life. On top of that, she now is labelled "a loser." And what spot would you drop her in? Where would you run her?

Scobie: Yes, she would move to New York so--

Meyers: Well, then she'd have been a carpetbagger back there. [Laughs]

Scobie: Is that part of why they went to New York, do you think?

Meyers: Part of why they went to New York was because of the defeat here I think and because--no, that's unfair. I think Mel got more and more wound up with the stage because he did a whole series of plays about that time including Inherit the Wind and he also got involved in the production of plays--Call Me Mister I think was one of them. I just think Mel became more important, and rightfully so, than an elective office.

Scobie: How did he feel though during the forties and particularly when she was in Congress about her being a politician?

Meyers: Yes, and she was a good politician. But that doesn't necessarily make her a good campaigner. It's a fact, there are some very good politicians who were not good campaigners. Their record speaks for itself, and they've got to have good pros in back of them. But I have to agree with Ed Lybeck, ex post facto, that she'd have done herself prouder and the country more service by staying in Congress and becoming chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee because that became more and more important. Part of her campaign was an insistence on domestic issues. Notice the kind of campaigning today. If you confined yourself to domestic issues today, you'd wind up behind the eight ball. She would have been in the forefront on that score.

Scobie: I've assumed that Helen didn't really think about running for the Senate until late '49. But some place I ran across the comment that she really was thinking about it a lot earlier and this came up in a conversation about the atomic energy committee.

Meyers: You found that out with Chet too, didn't you.

Scobie: I haven't spoken to Chet yet.

Meyers: Oh, I thought you talked to Chet.

Scobie: No, I just conversed with him on the phone. I haven't interviewed him. But she really wasn't, from what I can find out, particularly active in the actual legislative side of the McMahon bill. At least I can't seem to find any documentation to that effect. She did a lot of talking, and I guess picked up the McMahon bill in the House and then helped run it through. But then when a joint atomic energy committee, which was part of the legislation that came out of the McMahon bill, was appointed, she was not one of the House members appointed to that.



Meyers: I think Chet was.

Scobie: Why wasn't she?

Meyers: They weren't going to appoint two from adjoining districts.

Scobie: Do you think that's the only reason?

Meyers: Yes.

Scobie: Why didn't she--

Meyers: Campaign for it?

Scobie: Yes.

Meyers: She might have thought it wasn't important enough as an issue. She had the ideas or somebody put ideas into her head about the Senate before late '49 because I made the trip before late '49.

Scobie: When did you make that trip?

Meyers: I have a hunch that trip was made either in the beginning of summer or just the end of summer.

Scobie: Of '49.

Meyers: Of '49, because I don't recall that it was too damn hot in the San Joaquin Valley! [Laughs] But, no, she had been feeling out about it, and I'm darn sure that I had discussions with Ed about it when he voiced his opinion that he thought she ought to stay right where she was and we could reelect her ad infinitum which was true.

Scobie: She knew how to win that kind of campaign.

Meyers: There she did what we told her and what Mel told her. It was a small campaign.

Scobie: But then on the state campaign, do you think Evie kind of ran against what you all were saying?

Meyers: Well, Evie is a highly emotional girl and was subjected to a lot of tugging and pulling and hauling and I think that it's also significant that there were a lot of key people who were not that effective. You mentioned Sacramento and I could tell you in Bakersfield and others that were headed up by women should not have been. I don't mean that it was an outright mistake but they should have had window dressing of some prominent male Democrat.

Scobie: I went through the county correspondence which is in her files and it's little-old-lady tea parties all over the state. No window dressing, no money, no big people. She went into so many places she didn't need to go, just as you have commented. She wasted a lot of time. Who pulled her away from that that is hard to say. Maybe it was Helen herself.

Meyers: The number of votes you can get in some of these small communities you can put in a hat.

I have to cite a parallel for you. When Culbert Olson was governor, he had a so-called campaign manager whose father was very active in promoting the Townsend plan in Long Beach. Lockheed had (and still has, I think) something called the "Buck a Month Club" where the employees throw a dollar a month in and contribute to anything that they like politically or for charity.

They had a meeting planned for the two big plants in Burbank facing each other so that they were going to fill one and take loud-speakers over to the other. They said that they would get thirty to forty thousand people. Olson went that night to talk to twenty-four Townsendites in Long Beach because of his campaign manager's father. So he went right up the flue with those people. I doubt that he got a dozen votes down there. This happened in Helen's campaign. She was at the wrong place too often at the wrong time, not because she did it unilaterally but because somebody convinced her that it should be done. And she often spoke about issues, e.g. 160-acres, with no relation to her audience.

Scobie: Who do you think that was?

Meyers: Somebody who really didn't know too much about what was going on. Now, as for the rest of the campaign, all the people you could mention as being functionaries and being powerful in the Democratic party, starting with Bill Malone in San Francisco, up and down the coast, they were practically absent from that campaign, so your question about how that campaign fused with the Democratic campaign is one of negative interaction. If it fused at all, it was lip service.

Scobie: What was the story with Malone?

Meyers: He was oil, strictly, as was Downey; and by the way, they thought that they could win with Boddy and when they didn't, they just sat on their hands.

Scobie: Even though they told you earlier that they would support Helen with Downey out.

Meyers: Yes, of course. That meant nothing. When the purse strings were pulled, all that meant nothing. As I say, they sat on their hands. We found that all up and down the state. The Democratic party of the state of California and Helen Douglas's campaign and Jim Roosevelt's campaign for governor were off in three different directions.

Scobie: I wonder if Helen's friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt had awkward moments because she didn't work with Jimmy. Helen and Eleanor were such close friends.

Meyers: I know that. Really, it wasn't that Helen didn't work with Jimmy or that he didn't work with us. I really think that those close to each campaign suspected the other was a loser and didn't want to get tied together. Remember the campaign against Helen was pure McCarthyism, but Jim had the label of carpetbagger hung around his neck against a powerful incumbent.

As far as where Eleanor stood, I don't know because I wasn't there. But something occurred later that I can well remember. It was when Ed Lybeck, Ruth and I, and Susie Clifton put Jim into the congressional campaign in '54 that Eleanor begged him not to run-- I repeat begged him not to run--"because you will be defeated out there and you're going to hurt Franklin's chances in New York for attorney general." Of course, Jim won here and Franklin was the only Democrat on that ticket in New York who was defeated because Tammany ganged up on him.

Scobie: You said at one point there that someone was persuading Helen to go in other directions, preventing her from going along with what you all were suggesting. Who was that? Evie?

Meyers: Evie was closest to her, but I don't think she was pulling against us.

Scobie: Who else?

Meyers: I couldn't attribute it to anybody else because I didn't know. For example, now this is strictly conjectural, she might be in San Francisco and Ellie Heller might say, "Look here. You've got to go up to Tiburon." You never know how those things develop. It takes a sort of chain reaction and Helen was in a position where she couldn't say no to people like Ellie. Now, I don't say that happened. As a matter of fact, I think it didn't happen. But that's the way it could have happened.

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Assistant Executive Secretary, Organization of American Historians, 1970-73; Lecturer, History Department, Princeton University, 1975, in twentieth-century United States history; Senior Fulbright-Hays Lecturer, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1976, in United States history; Lecturer, History Department, University of California, San Diego, 1977-1979, in twentieth-century United States history; University of California award for innovative curriculum development for course on family and community history; taught oral history technique in all courses.

Professional papers at Western History Association (1969, 1973), Newberry Library (1979), Berkshire Conference on Women's History (1981); published articles in Pacific Historical Review, California Historical Quarterly, Public Historian.

Research in progress: Helen Gahagan Douglas and Twentieth-Century America; includes oral history interviews; research travel grants for this research from the Eleanor Roosevelt Institute and the American Philosophical Society.

Interviewer-editor for the Regional Oral History Office, 1978-80, for the Helen Gahagan Douglas Project.



















